BRUCE LEE

The Oakland Years PART I

by Greglon Lee and Sid Campbell

What you are about to read is perhaps the most personal, in-depth account of Bruce Lee's life that has ever appeared in a martial arts magazine. While much has been written about Bruce as a child growing up in Hong Kong, as a student of Yip Man, as a martial arts instructor in Los Angeles, and as an actor in Hollywood, very little has ever appeared about the years he spent training in Oakland, California, with James Yimm Lee, a talented and innovative kung fu stylist in his own right. The few years Bruce spent with James left a lasting impression on the "Dragon's" ideology and shaped his outlook on the martial arts for years to come. The following material has been excerpted from an unpublished book manuscript co-authored by James Lee's son, Greglon, and Sid Campbell. The authors conducted months of painstaking research, interviewing martial artists and friends who were close to both men, and pouring over photos and documents the late James Lee left behind. Their efforts culminated in a manuscript of more than 1,000 pages that is as intriguing as it is insightful. In the next four issues, BLACK BELT will bring you the highlights of their

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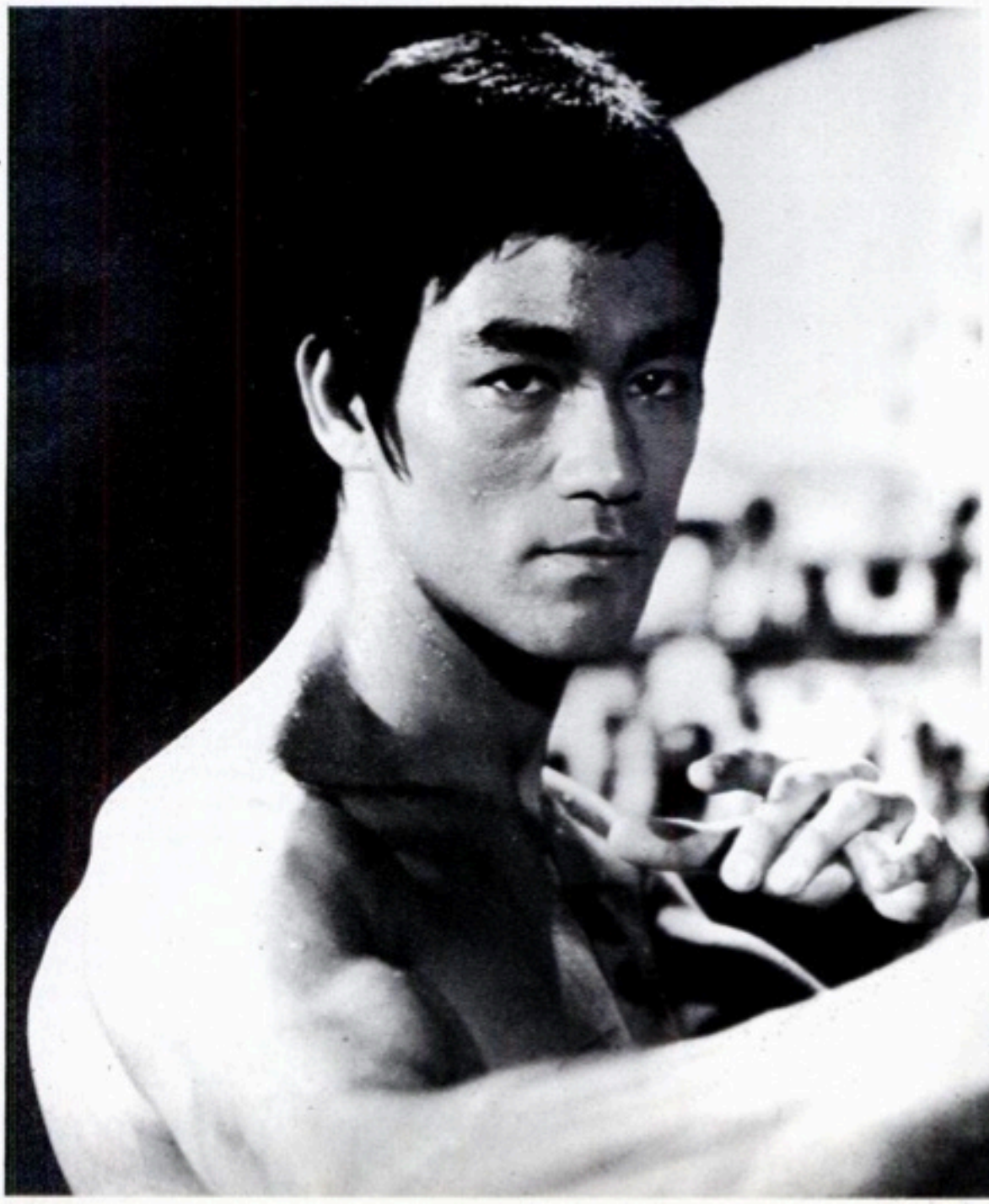

Photo courtesy of Golden Harvest

In Seattle, Bruce Lee often practiced his wing chun kung fu techniques (above) alone in the backyard behind the Chow restaurant. He lived in a room above the restaurant.

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Bruce learned wing chun in Hong Kong from Yip Man (on left at left). While in Seattle, Bruce wrote to Yip and others at the Hong Kong school to inform them of the art's development in the U.S.

work, taking you from Bruce Lee's first boat trip to the United States, to the embryonic U.S. development of wing chun by Bruce in Seattle, to his training days with James Lee in Oakland, to his first meeting with illustrious martial artists Ed Parker and Ralph Castro, to his marriage to Linda Lee, and to his final days with James Lee, as the latter dies of cancer. You will see Bruce as you have never seen him before, as a real, personable human being trying to cope with growing up in a new and different world, balancing his many responsibilities with his primary love—the martial arts. It's a touching story you will remember long after the pages of the magazine have yellowed and faded from years in storage. And that is as it should be.—Ed.

The Hong Kong harbor was bustling with the activity of small boats and Chinese junks scurrying through the waters that separate Hong Kong from the mainland coastal city of Kowloon. There was nothing unusual about this humid spring day in 1959, except that a large passenger ship was preparing to depart for San Francisco. The crew was unsecuring the lines and making ready for the 20-day voyage to the Western world. Family and friends were bidding their final farewells to the passengers.

On the starboard side of the main deck stood a 19-year-old Chinese filled with anticipation as he waved to members of his family and several friends who had come to the dock to see him off. The slender youth entertained visions of success in the strange new world ahead that he vaguely remembered as the place of his birth. As the final command to cast off passed over the public address system, the ship began to move slowly away from the pier. For Bruce Lee, this was destined to be the opportunity of a lifetime.

After what seemed like several months of sailing through the vast and uncertain waters of the Pacific Ocean, the ship's captain announced they would soon be anchoring in the fabled city of San Francisco. Thoughts of a new life, an education, new friends, adventures, and a chance for an exciting career ran through Lee's head as the ship passed under the Golden Gate Bridge and steamed toward the pier.

Bruce knew there were some important obligations to be attended to when he set his feet on solid ground. He

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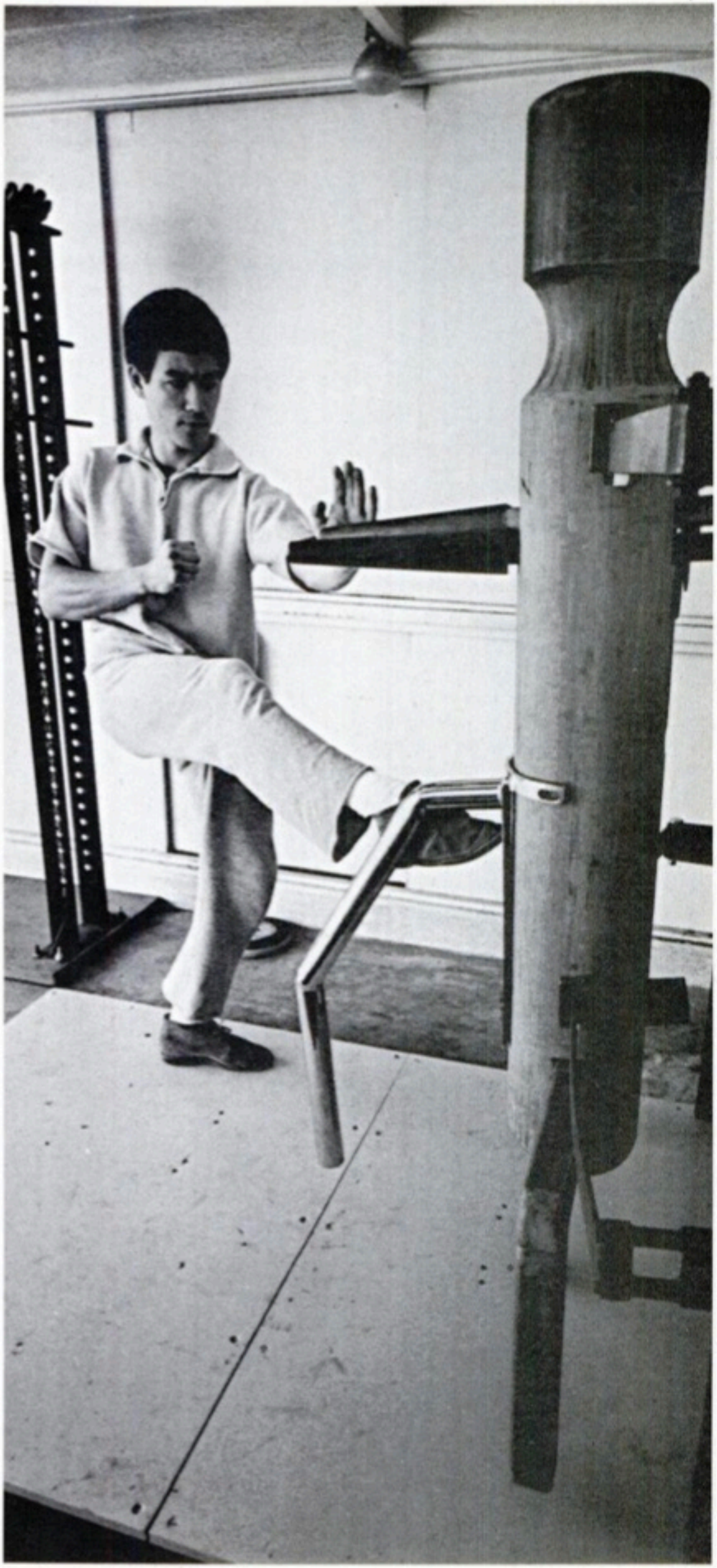
In Seattle, Bruce sorely missed the wooden dummy he used to train on in Hong Kong. He eventually had one sent to him from overseas. Bruce trained with such ferocity, it's a wonder the dummy remained intact.

placed the necessity to reclaim his birthright as an American citizen first and foremost on his list of priorities. Thoughts of completing his high school education and fulfilling the necessary requirements for adjustment to the American way of life also weighed on his mind. He knew he possessed skills in the ancient Chinese art of *wing chun* kung fu, and he knew his wit and ability to survive might come in handy in this strange and excitingly new environment. It was going to be a real test of his skill to survive in the Western world. At that moment, he made up his mind he could do anything he set his mind to and no one could stop him.

Bruce moved in with Quan Ging Ho, a friend of the Lee family who lived in San Francisco. The next several months were filled with sight-seeing excursions all over the Bay Area. One Saturday night, Quan and Bruce were invited to a house party. The night marked the beginning of an important era in the history of martial arts. For it was here that Bruce was introduced to Robert Lee, whose younger brother, James Yimm Lee, would eventually become his close training partner.

Bruce later met James, but before he had an opportunity to train with him, Bruce moved to Seattle to complete his education. There, he met Ruby Chow, another friend of Bruce's family, and he was given a room above the Chow's Chinese restaurant. Weather permitting, he used the small backyard of the restaurant to sharpen his out-of-practice martial arts skills. These morning or afternoon sessions also gave him the opportunity to vent some of the pent-up frustration of working as a sometime waiter and oftentime busboy at the restaurant. The daily treks of walking to and from Edison Technical Vocational School also gave Bruce an opportunity to get in additional exercise that he deemed necessary to keep his body in peak physical condition.

One of Bruce's classmates at Edison was Jessie Glover, and it wasn't long before the two began training together in the backyard of the Chow restaurant and other locations. Word soon spread to some of their schoolmates that Bruce was teaching a relatively unheard-of Chinese martial art known as wing chun, and in a matter of weeks, he was acting as a full-fledged instructor to his classmates. The nucleus of the meager,



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Bruce called his school in Seattle the "Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute," and practitioners received membership cards (above). On the cards were the words: "Using No Way as Way, Having No Limitation as Limitation."

but still growing group of enthusiastic students consisted of Glover, Taky Kimura, James Demile and Charlie Woo.

The student-teacher relationship between Bruce and his neophyte wing chun disciples soon lessened considerably and more of a fraternal relationship emerged. It was Glover who finally suggested that Bruce begin charging a monthly fee for his services as a martial arts instructor. Bruce listened intently as Jessie conveyed his thoughts pertaining to professional attitudes that are practiced by anyone who possesses rare knowledge or specialized training. If indeed Bruce could charge for instruction and attract new followers, he quite possibly could quit the job at the restaurant and sustain a livelihood more becoming of his pride and personal choice.

The only question that remained in Bruce's mind was if it were really possible to recruit a large enough following to supplement his meager salary and tips at the restaurant. That doubt was soon erased when Jessie, Taky, James and Charlie began to spread the word about Bruce's skills in a more liberal manner. In a matter of weeks, Bruce's intentions were common knowledge around Chinatown and the University of Washington. In a period of a week or so, Bruce was busy accepting new students and introducing them to a fundamental regimen of exercises and basic martial arts techniques. The first ten new students insured him an additional income of $100 per month. Although this was about equal to what he was making at the restaurant, there was still a need to retain his waiter job until he had a few more seriously interested devotees.

That fall, after graduating from Edison, Bruce enrolled at the University of Washington in Seattle. Between completing his freshman assignments and working at nights, Bruce began calculating the possibility of an actual kung fu school. He gathered Jessie, Taky, James and Charlie at an informal meeting to convey his plans. The gang spent most of the afternoons and weekends painstakingly perusing vacant buildings in the Chinatown district of Seattle. They settled on an old, abandoned building in the heart of Chinatown. The floor area was spacious enough to permit 20 or more students without cramping their movements. Bruce painted a small sign on the front door of the street-level entrance to the upstairs gym: Jun Fan Gung Fu Club. ("Jun Fan" was Bruce's Chinese name. "Gung fu" was his pre-

Photo courtesy of Gregjon Lee

Bruce originally met James Yimm Lee (right) in the San Francisco area. James later called Bruce in Seattle and asked him to come to Oakland to teach wing chun. It was the beginning of a long relationship.

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Upon graduating from high school, Bruce enrolled at the University of Washington (right) in Seattle. Despite teaching and practicing martial arts on a daily basis, he usually maintained a "B" average in college.

ferred pronunciation of kung fu.)

Bruce taught all three of the traditional wing chun forms in much the same manner that he had been taught by Yip Man, his instructor in Hong Kong. The simple and direct self-defense applications were interpreted and explained by Bruce in a very practical sense. The directness of Bruce's teachings left very little to the imagination, and there was no doubt in the students' minds that they were learning a realistic way of fighting and self-defense.

Bruce's competence as an instructor progressed daily, and from these early lessons evolved a style that was uniquely his own. As the technical aspects of his art became refined, so did the explanations that conveyed the deeper wisdom behind his interpretations. The senior students were quite pleased that he could give such a well-defined reason for each and every thing they were learning.

In March of 1961, just four months after the original Jun Fan Gung Fu Club opened in Chinatown, the classes had expanded to the point where no more students could fit into the school comfortably. Bruce and Taky scouted an-

Photo by James O. Sneddon

other location just several blocks from the present *kwoon* (school) and decided it was time to move on to a bigger building. In the first month after the relocation, over 25 students were participating in classes on a nightly basis.

On November 27, 1961, Bruce celebrated his 21st birthday with a small group of senior students at a restaurant in Chinatown. He was pleased with the reality that he was legally of age to represent himself in any manner that suited his liking. Since he did not imbibe in alcoholic beverages, this legal consent did not affect him in the least. The strongest drink Bruce ever had was a mug of cold root beer. But knowing he was completely responsible for his own actions gave him a feeling of well-being he had never before experienced.

During the Christmas break at the university, Bruce promoted Taky Kimura to assistant instructor because of his sincerity and unwavering dedication. With Taky as his assistant, it would mean teaching responsibilities could be divided and it would take some of the pressure off of Bruce, allowing him to spend more time developing his own skills, which were somewhat lacking since he had committed so much of his free time to his school.

While preparing to resume the academic curriculum at the university, Bruce took time out from his rushed schedule to write Yip Man in Hong Kong and report some of the progress he had made in America toward spreading the word of wing chun. He also wanted to re-establish communications with some of the seniors of the Hong Kong kwoon and try to get a traditional training dummy known as a *mook jong*. This device would be a great addition to the training of the students, as well as enhance Bruce's own block-and-counterattack skills.

Just before Christmas, the mook jong Bruce had ordered from Hong Kong arrived at the Chow restaurant. He immediately set it up in the small backyard below his upstairs room and commenced to make up for the several years he had been without one. The brutal way in which Bruce struck the wooden dummy's arms would have undoubtedly broken a human's arm.

The new year brought Bruce back to the realization that it was time to become actively involved with his school studies, which were gradually being neglected because of his interest in martial arts. His grades had dropped a bit, and he knew he would have to buckle down if he were to raise his grade-point average to the level he had enjoyed the previous year. His concentrated scholastic efforts paid off, and by the end of his second school year, he had raised his grade-point average back near the "B" level.

The 1962 summer vacation looked promising for Bruce in many ways.

Photo courtesy of Gregion Lee

At left, Bruce (center) sits with James Yimm Lee (right) and Allen Joe (left) at Christmastime. At James' request, Allen met Bruce in Seattle while on vacation and was highly impressed with the "Dragon's" skills.

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Classes at the school had grown to such a proportion that he was considering relocating the kwoon closer to the university campus, where it would receive more exposure and potential kung fu students from the college. His search was fruitful, and in several weeks the new facility was in good enough condition to resume classes.

About this same time, an Oakland grocer named Allen Joe took his family on a vacation that would include a stop in Seattle. While there, Allen hoped to get the opportunity to meet Bruce Lee, whom he had heard about from James Yimm Lee. Allen was a close friend of James and had studied the Chinese art of *sil lum* from him in the Oakland area. At James' request, Allen, time and situations permitting, was to check out this fellow who was teaching kung fu in Seattle. The casual introduction between James and Bruce in 1959 was less than significant at the time, but James, being the serious martial artist he was, tried to stay abreast of individuals who had knowledge pertaining to the arts.

Allen eventually met Bruce at the Chow restaurant and was impressed with the way he carried himself. After a bit of social discourse, Allen mentioned that he was a sil lum student under the tutelage of James Lee. Bruce suggested that if Allen wanted to see some of the wing chun techniques, he could come with him to the backyard of the restaurant, where he would demonstrate some of the intricacies of his art.

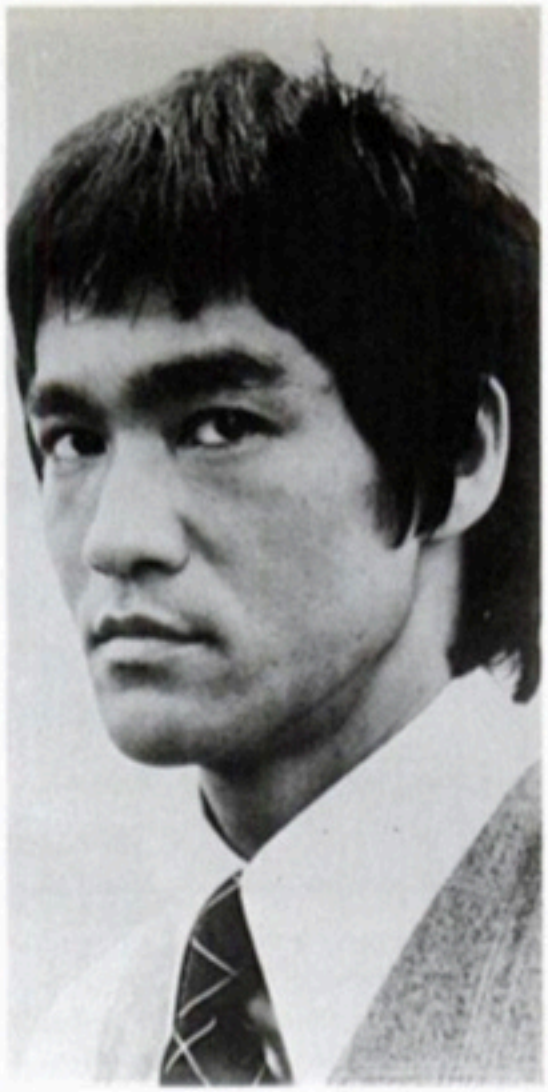

Photo courtesy of Greglon Lee

Whether dressed in a suit and tie, or attired in traditional martial arts garb, Bruce had the look you didn't want to know better. When his students saw that look, they knew it was time to shut up and listen.

Once in the backyard, Bruce positioned himself in front of the mook jong and commenced with rapid sequences of offensive and defensive combinations that comprise the 108 routines of the wing chun style. The wooden arms of the training dummy vibrated incessantly as Bruce continued to pound out a steady rhythm against the sturdy protrusions.

After the display of dynamic power and explosive speed, Allen could tell Bruce was well versed in not only the theoretical aspects of his art, but could adequately protect himself as well. Allen's immediate thoughts were that James would be overwhelmingly impressed with this man's martial arts prowess. As they parted company, both Allen and Bruce agreed to remain in contact.

By mid-August, Bruce was spending the greater portion of his summer vacation working out at the kwoon to develop and perfect his martial arts capabilities, while using most of the evenings to

Continued on page 116

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BRUCE LEE

Continued from page 34

teach his crowded classes. It was during one of the busy classes that Bruce was interrupted by a long-distance telephone call. Taky took over the instructor's duties and Bruce retired to the small office to receive the call.

Bruce was surprised to find that it was James Yimm Lee of Oakland calling to reintroduce himself and to discuss martial arts. James explained that Allen Joe had mentioned the meeting at the Chow restaurant, and the former wanted to call to say that Allen was very impressed with Bruce's kung fu abilities. Bruce immediately sensed that James was a serious exponent of the art of kung fu, and it seemed James was interested in meeting him and sharing martial arts knowledge.

In a rather direct manner, James asked Bruce if it was "at all possible in the future for you to come down to the Oakland area and teach me some of this Chinese art?" Bruce deemed the request an opportunity to expand his teaching while paying respects to friends and relatives he had not seen since he left for Seattle in the fall of 1959. He consented to make the trip down to the Bay Area the following week and said he would be pleased to discuss martial arts and possibly teach, provided there was true sincerity there. To this, James quickly replied "I am as serious as they come. And while you are in Oakland, you can stay at my home."

James was ecstatic that Bruce had accepted his offer. Little did he know that an everlasting bond between the two was about to develop.

Stay tuned next issue for part two of "Bruce Lee: The Oakland Years," as Bruce travels to the Bay Area, commences training with James Lee, and meets such martial arts notables as Ed Parker and Ralph Castro.

About the Authors: Greglon Lee, son of noted wing chun exponent James Yimm Lee, is teaching martial arts in the San Francisco area. Sid Campbell runs an Okinawan karate school in Oakland.

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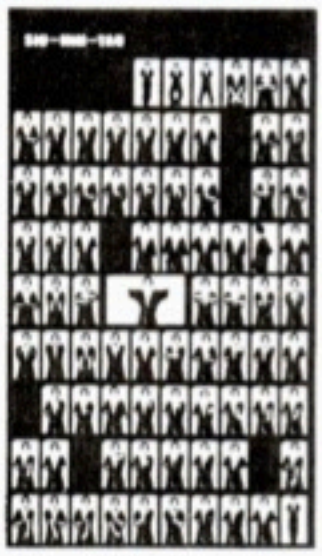

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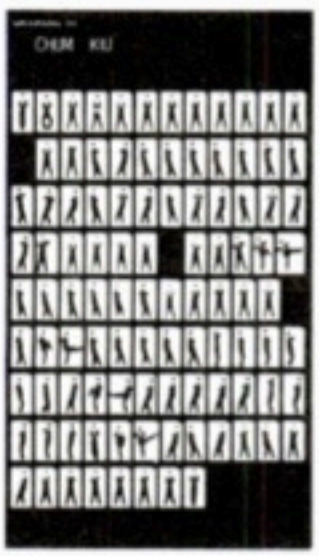

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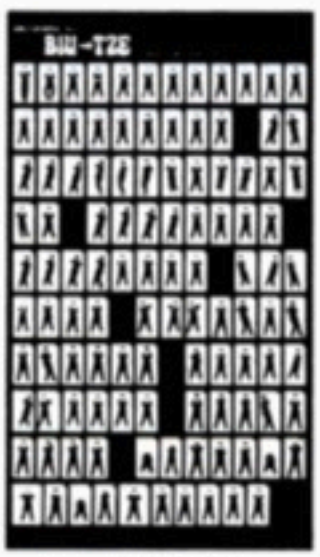

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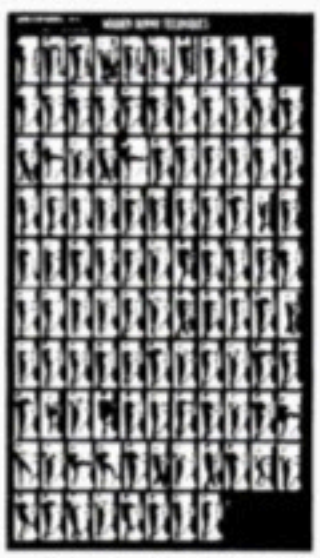

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BRUCE LEE

THE OAKLAND YEARS—PART II

by Greglon Lee and Sid Campbell

Last issue, BLACK BELT brought you part one of "Bruce Lee: The Oakland Years," an exclusive personal account of Bruce's first difficult years in the United States, acclimating and developing his own kung fu style. The material has been excerpted from an unpublished book manuscript co-authored by Greglon Lee and Sid Campbell. Last month, you read how Bruce sailed to America from Hong Kong with great hope for the future, eventually opening his own kung fu school in Seattle. When we left him last, he had agreed to travel to Oakland to teach wing chun to James Yimm Lee, whom he had met only once very briefly. Unbeknown to Bruce, the trips to Oakland would become more frequent, as a lasting bond

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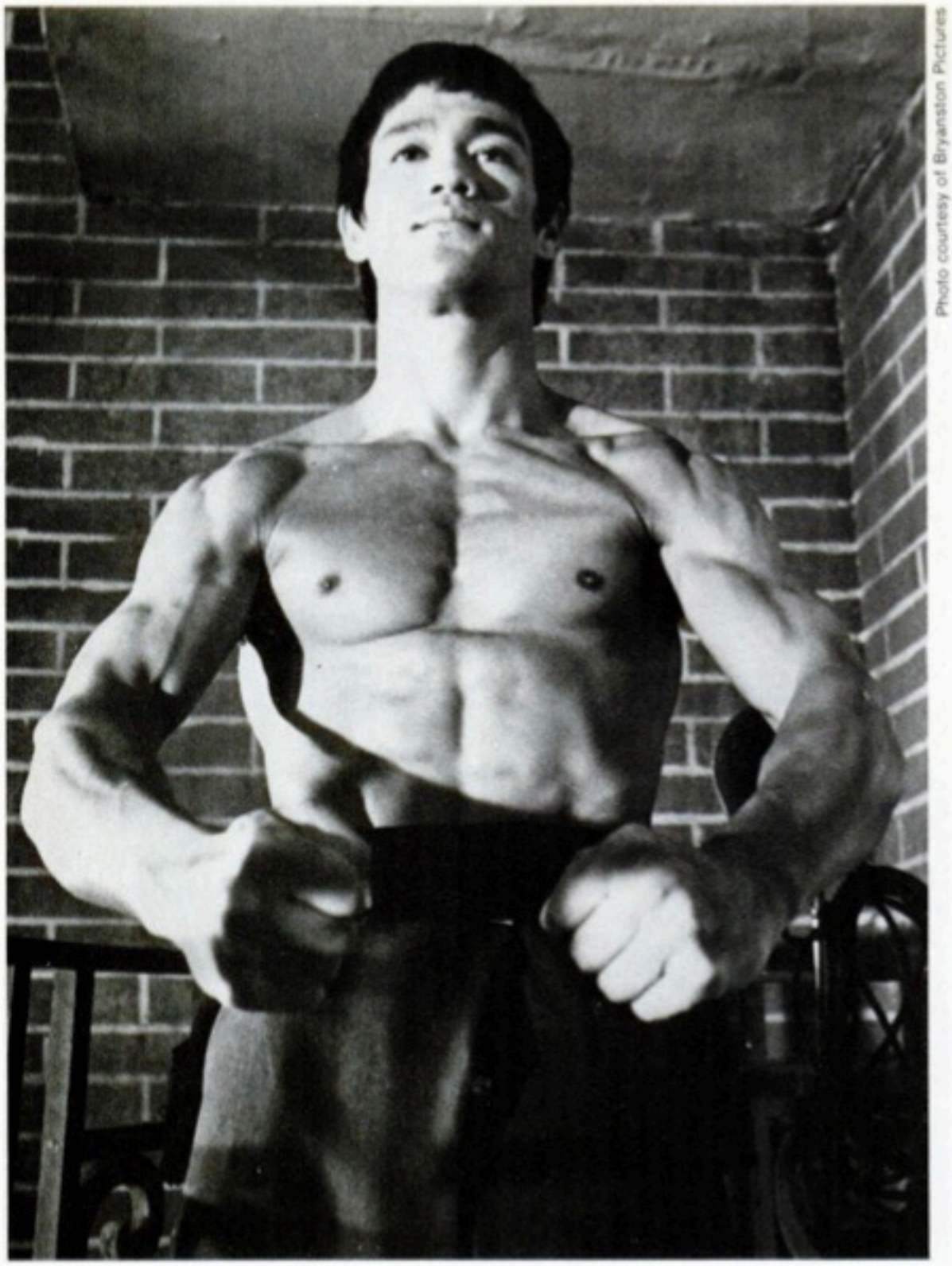

Photo courtesy of Bryanston Pictures

Photo courtesy of Gregion Lee

While training with James Lee, Bruce became interested in bodybuilding (left) and worked out with James' weights. Bruce was also intrigued by jujitsu expert Wally Jay's (above) small-circle theory.

developed between Bruce and James. This issue, Bruce is introduced to noted martial artists Ed Parker and Ralph Castro and reveals his California expansion plans to James Lee. —*Ed.*

The long drive in the black 1957 Ford seemed rather short to Bruce Lee, even though it took over eight hours to make the trip from Seattle to Oakland. This was the first long-distance drive Bruce had ever attempted, and it proved to be a real challenge. He had never used American road maps to any extent, and it showed whenever he would suddenly find himself lost in a small out-of-the-way town along the coast. Every service station he stopped at for gas also became a stop for instructions and lessons in map reading.

It was with great relief that Bruce finally pulled into the driveway of James Yimm Lee's Oakland residence. There was an uncertain air of anticipation as he walked up the stairs and knocked on the door. He was immediately greeted by the affable James, who cheerfully welcomed him into the home. After James' wife, Katherine, served Bruce and her husband a cup of tea, James directed the conversation toward the martial arts.

The first topic of conversation stemmed from an earlier meeting Bruce had had with Alameda, California, judo and jujitsu instructor Wally Jay in Seattle. James suggested calling Wally and informing him Bruce was in Oakland. Bruce was pleasantly surprised at the attention he was receiving from a gentleman he had only met momentarily at a cha-cha class over three years before.

Bruce could not help overhearing James tell Wally "Remember the kung fu man you met by the name of Bruce Lee in Seattle? Well, he's here at my home. We plan on sharing some kung fu knowledge and getting to know one another better." James concluded the conversation by telling Wally they would pay him a visit later that evening.

James offered to show Bruce many of his martial arts-related projects. Bruce was dumbstruck by the innovative training equipment James had developed. The garage was filled with all sorts of steel punching and kicking devices James had made by applying his skills as a welder. Although many were still in the designing stages, Bruce could sense James was years ahead of his time. Every spring-loaded apparatus imaginable was securely mounted to the walls surrounding the garage where James conducted his *sil lum* kung fu classes. Even in Hong

Photo courtesy of Gregion Lee

After witnessing James Lee break large stacks of bricks and boards (above) without apparent injury to his hands, Bruce was determined to master the iron-palm breaking method.

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Kong, when he was surrounded by the classical martial environment, Bruce had never seen such clever types of training equipment.

James gave Bruce a full demonstration on each and every piece of equipment. Afterward, Bruce tried his skill on the machines. Even after the long drive, Bruce displayed an abundance of energy. Each time he struck a device, the entire house would shake. Bruce's curious mind prompted him to attempt different variations on the equipment. Bruce was impressed with the knowledge James had of physics, mechanics and leverage, and his ability to develop equipment that could ultimately enhance the ability of any martial artist.

After their workout, Bruce and James drove the few miles to Wally Jay's school. The entire evening was spent discussing the deeper meanings of true martial arts. Bruce demonstrated many of the practical applications he taught at the *kwoon* (kung fu school) in Seattle. Both Wally and James were impressed with the shocking power and speed Bruce injected into the straight and direct offensive and defensive attacks.

They returned to James' home that evening and Bruce was assigned a bed and given particulars of the house so he could feel at home. The greater portion of the following day, Saturday, was spent discussing specifics of both the *sil lum* and the *wing chun* styles. Bruce also discovered that day that James was deeply committed to physical fitness, specifically bodybuilding. Bruce was impressed that a Chinese of James' stature was as physically developed as he was, especially since he was twice Bruce's age. Bruce encouraged James to give him some pointers so he could increase his body development. The latter part of the day was spent developing a workable program that Bruce could continue when he returned to Seattle.

In exchange for the bodybuilding knowledge, Bruce was happy to share his knowledge of *chi sao* (sticky hand) training and some of the fundamental skills of wing chun, for which James was deeply grateful.

The entire Sunday was spent training and sharing bodybuilding and martial arts knowledge. As the weekend drew to a close, there had been more excitement than Bruce had ever expected. The new friends and martial arts acquaintances he had the opportunity to make were a sure sign that his trip had not been in vain. He promised James he would return to Oakland the first chance he got.

Back in Seattle, Bruce registered for his third year at the University of Washington. He had given much thought to graduating from the university with a degree in philosophy. Bruce felt a degree of this type would fit quite nicely with his martial arts endeavors. The Chinese philosophies, while different from the teachings of the West, seemed to agree with Bruce's understanding of both hemispheres. His own teachings at the kwoon were sprinkled with elements of both philosophies when there was a real need to communicate at a deeper level with his students. Bruce seemed to have mastered the ability to use both types of philosophies in an interwoven fashion to suit his own particular needs.

Photo courtesy of Gregion Lee

While visiting James Lee in Oakland, Bruce (back row, fifth from left) sat in on James' sil lum kung fu classes in his host's garage. James is kneeling in the front row, third from left.

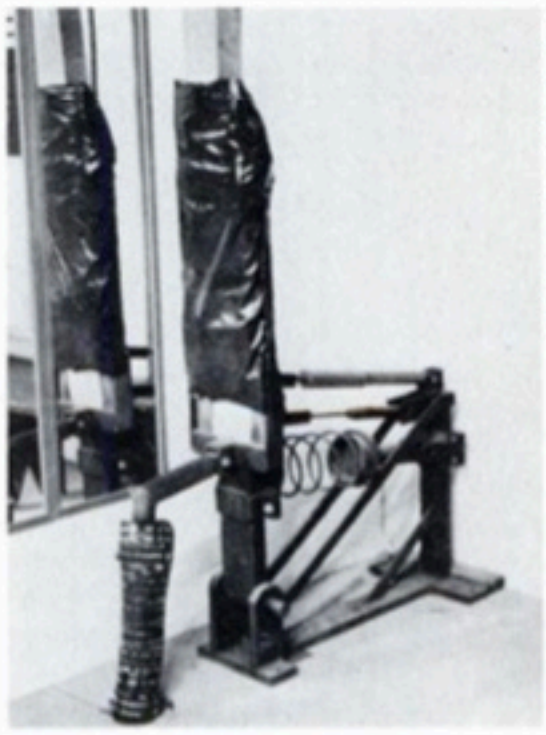

Photo courtesy of Gregion Lee

James Lee's garage was filled with innovative kicking and punching devices he had developed by applying his skill as a welder. Bruce was dumbstruck by the variety of equipment.

One night Bruce received a call from James Lee, who stressed that it was important he try to come down to the Bay Area as soon as possible to work out the small details of the book they were collaborating on. Bruce drove down to Oakland after the Thanksgiving weekend. James had invited a close martial arts friend named Ralph Castro to come meet Bruce. Castro, who had a successful *kenpo* school in San Francisco, brought along a fellow kenpo instructor by the name of Ed Parker, who was visiting from his own school in Pasadena, California.

James mentioned that Parker had recently produced the first International Karate Championships in Long Beach, California, and along with Castro, was one of the leading kenpo exponents in the United States. Bruce was very interested in where they had learned the art of kenpo, and Castro noted that both Parker and himself had studied as schoolmates under several notable kenpo instructors in Hawaii, but considered William K.S. Chow their direct instructor.

James sat quietly and listened as Bruce, Ed and Ralph discussed the similarities in historical origins and philosophical aspects of their arts. Although Bruce was somewhat defensive in nature, especially when meeting martial artists of different styles for the first time, he began to relax as the night wore on. It occurred to him that there was no real reason to be defensive. The whole idea of his trips to Oakland was to meet fellow martial artists who wanted to share the knowledge they had acquired over the years.

James prompted Bruce to demonstrate some of his punching and kicking skills into the air. Bruce commenced to unleash multiple punch and counterat-

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tacks while simultaneously injecting low kicking maneuvers into the sequences. Both Castro and Parker instantly realized that Bruce was indeed an exceptional kung fu practitioner.

As Parker watched the lightning-quick offensive and defensive combinations, he could not help but think how extraordinary Bruce was at using "sticking" movements. This was a skill very few martial artists had, even after many years of intense training under expert guidance. Parker could tell that the interaction between the left and right hands contained soft but firm, obvious yet deceptive, motions that formed a oneness with the body's movement. Even though Bruce was performing his techniques in the air without anything to obstruct his flow of motion, both Parker and Castro realized that if someone were to actually execute a single or multiple set of punches in Lee's direction, the blows would have been immediately neutralized.

After 30 minutes of demonstrating his skills, Bruce suggested they all go down to Chinatown and have dinner. At the restaurant, Bruce livened the atmosphere by telling several off-color jokes. The conversation soon returned to the subject of martial arts, however, and everybody contributed to the discussion as it vacillated between the harder and softer styles. Afterward, Castro invited Bruce over to his school in San Francisco.

In 20 minutes, they arrived at Castro's kenpo karate school. Bruce's eyes immediately scanned the entire facility. He was impressed with the simple and neat way everything in the school had been arranged. Castro had done an excellent job of presenting the martial arts in a professional and dignified manner. Bruce was particularly attracted to the creed mounted directly under the American flag. It read: "I come to you with only karate, empty hands, I have no weapons, but should I be forced to defend myself, my principles or my honor, should it be a matter of life or death, of right or wrong, then here are my weapons, karate, my empty hands." Castro mentioned that Parker had authored the creed back in March of 1957.

Bruce had yet to see much of the practical aspects of kenpo, and was curious as to how it compared with the techniques he had previously demonstrated to Castro and Parker. Bruce asked Ralph if he could see an example of some of the self-defense techniques kenpo offered. Both Castro and Parker obliged his request by performing some close-range circular blocking maneuvers while counterattacking with linear punches.

After the demonstration, Bruce was

1

excited at the possibility of testing some of his specialty techniques against Parker or Castro. Since Bruce liked to use the swift back-knuckle attacks which were virtually impossible to defend, he was anxious to find out how the two kenpo stylists might fair against his incredible speed.

In a friendly but testing manner, Bruce asked Ralph how he would block the straight-line, back-knuckle strike when it was executed to the face. Castro responded by saying "Well, would you like to see?"

Bruce aligned himself directly in front of Ralph and Castro murmured "Ready when you are!"

Bruce exploded outward with a blinding back-knuckle strike directed at Castro's temple. Before the strike could reach its target of about one inch from the temple, Ralph had shuffled slightly sideways while removing his head and upper body from the line of fire. He quickly executed a back-knuckle strike of his own.

Bruce immediately exclaimed "You son of a gun! That's the first time anyone has ever blocked my backfist!"

Castro laughed and said that "Since you set the stage by determining the type of technique, the distance, and the time when the technique was to be initiated, I had no choice but to do things as I did."

Both James and Ed thought the pair's antics were amusing to say the least, and Bruce and Ralph developed a mutual respect for each other's martial art skills.

The next morning, after working with James on the book, Bruce decided it was an opportune time to give his host instruction in the art of wing chun. In the short period of only one hour and ten minutes, James had learned the complete *sil lim tao* set of movements that made up the first wing chun form. This set contained all of the necessary knowledge and techniques of protecting the centerline of the body and economy of movement in attack and defense. Bruce stressed that James would have to practice the movements each and every day until they became automatic.

After the workout, James gave Bruce some pointers on the iron-palm breaking

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Photos courtesy of Gregion Lee

On his first trip to Oakland from Seattle, Bruce was introduced (1) to kenpo stylists Ed Parker and Ralph Castro (both standing behind Bruce and James). Bruce explained (2) his wing chun philosophies to both men, then demonstrated (3) some of his techniques on Parker. Later, Bruce and James demonstrated (4) some hand maneuvers for their two friends.

training he had been interested in. After witnessing James break large stacks of bricks and boards without apparent injury or damage to his hands, Bruce was determined to master the iron-palm method.

The long drive back to Seattle was rather dull, but Bruce had plenty of time to contemplate his plans for the future. He was quite pleased with his growing friendship with James, and he fully intended to give his students a detailed account of what had transpired over the weekend.

Only one week after his trip to Oakland, Bruce received a phone call from James. Bruce could sense the urgency in his friend's voice. James was so serious about the new style of kung fu Bruce was teaching him that he wanted to come to Seattle to train. James arranged to come up the following week and stay for two weeks. When he arrived, Bruce taught him two shadowboxing sets in addition to the one known as sil lim tao (way of the small idea), which James had learned while Bruce was in Oakland. The second set of movements was known as *chum kil* (searching for the bridge), in which James learned wing chun defensive maneuvering and closing techniques. The third set was *bil gee* (thrusting fingers). The three sets made up the complete empty-hand aspect of the art, and James was pleased at the progress he had made in the short time he was in Seattle.

James returned to Oakland, but Bruce came down to the Bay Area over the Christmas break to train with him. The three-and-a-half weeks Bruce planned to stay with James would be the longest period he had been away from Seattle since his arrival in the United States, and Bruce planned to make the best use of every passing hour. Even though James would be working every weekday, Bruce figured he could work out on his own and get serious about his weight training since James had a complete set of weights. The prospects of visiting some of his new friends, such as Ralph Castro, Wally Jay and Allen Joe, also sounded appealing.

Before lunch each day, Bruce would go to the garage and begin his workout. He liked to train until he felt all of his energy was diminished before he ate. He hated to feel full or anywhere near that point when he started a rigorous training regimen, because that would only slow him down. He felt that the most energy could be exerted when the body was operating with its minimum of reserves.

Several days a week, after he had completed his workout, he would drive to Wally Jay's Island Judo and Jujitsu School in Alameda. Wally was always pleased to see Bruce and they would spend several hours just talking about martial arts. Bruce was intrigued with the "small circle" theory Wally had been developing for some time and wanted to know as much about it as possible.

On alternate days, Bruce would travel over the Bay Bridge to San Francisco to visit Ralph Castro at his kenpo karate school. Bruce was very impressed with the logical ways in which Ralph put martial arts in perspective. They could discuss martial arts for hours and, regardless of whether they agreed or disagreed on a specific point, they were never offended by each other's interpretations. To both of them, the martial arts was a complete science that contained every aspect of life, and every situation could be explained through proper reasoning.

Bruce spent the majority of Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights with James, refining the wing chun techniques he had taught him in Seattle and introducing him to the more advanced levels of chi sao training. Bruce was waiting for the day when James would be ready to attempt the training against him while blindfolded. he knew that at the rate James was assimilating the knowledge, he would be at that point in no time.

On Tuesday and Thursday nights, Bruce was content to observe James teach his small group of students in the garage. Bruce was pleased to see that James was incorporating some of the techniques and principles they had developed over the past few weeks. It was as if a metamorphosis was taking place right in front of his very eyes.

The three-and-a-half weeks of Christmas vacation passed quickly and Bruce

Continued on page 119

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BRUCE LEE

Continued from page 33

returned to Seattle to take care of his kwoon and academic studies at the university. By March, 1963, the kwoon was experiencing another growth in student enrollment. Bruce's assistant, Taky Kimura, was assuming more and more of the instructor's duties of introducing beginners to the class regimen. Bruce was teaching most of the advanced classes. Bruce felt beginners should be well skilled in the fundamental training techniques and not exposed to more advanced moves until they had reached a point where their mental comprehension was equal to their physical abilities.

One Friday night at the kwoon, Bruce received an urgent call from James, who asked Bruce to come down to the Bay Area to make some final corrections on their book. Bruce arrived in Oakland the next morning, and the pair wasted no time in getting to work on the manuscript.

Later that night, Bruce revealed a secret to James. He began by telling James that he had plans to expand the Jun Fan Gung Fu Club into California. Bruce felt California was where most of the trends and innovative ideas started from, and he wanted to be in on the ground floor of the martial arts there.

James sat quietly for several minutes, computing and assessing the information Bruce presented, then calmly asked "Bruce, where do I fit in?"

A big smile came across Bruce's face as he said "I want you to be the Oakland branch instructor of the Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute, that's where you fit in."

James could see that Bruce had given a lot of serious thought to the subject. When he could finally get a word in, James said "I think the idea is great and would like to be a part of something that has this potential. When do we start?"

"Right now!" Bruce replied.

Stay tuned next issue for part three of "Bruce Lee: The Oakland Years," as the legendary Dragon returns to Hong Kong and reunites with wing chun great Yip Man, and commences with his plans to expand into California.

About the Authors: Greglon Lee, son of the late James Yimm Lee, teaches martial arts in the San Francisco area. Sid Campbell runs an Okinawan karate school in Oakland.

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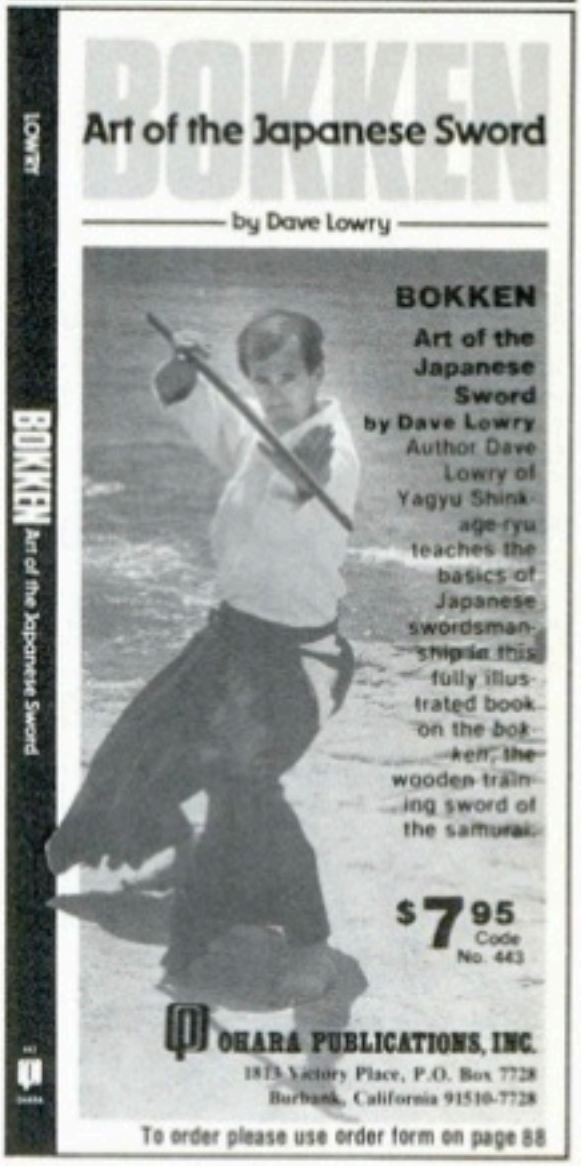

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BRUCE LEE

The Oakland Years— Part III

by Greglon Lee
and Sid Campbell

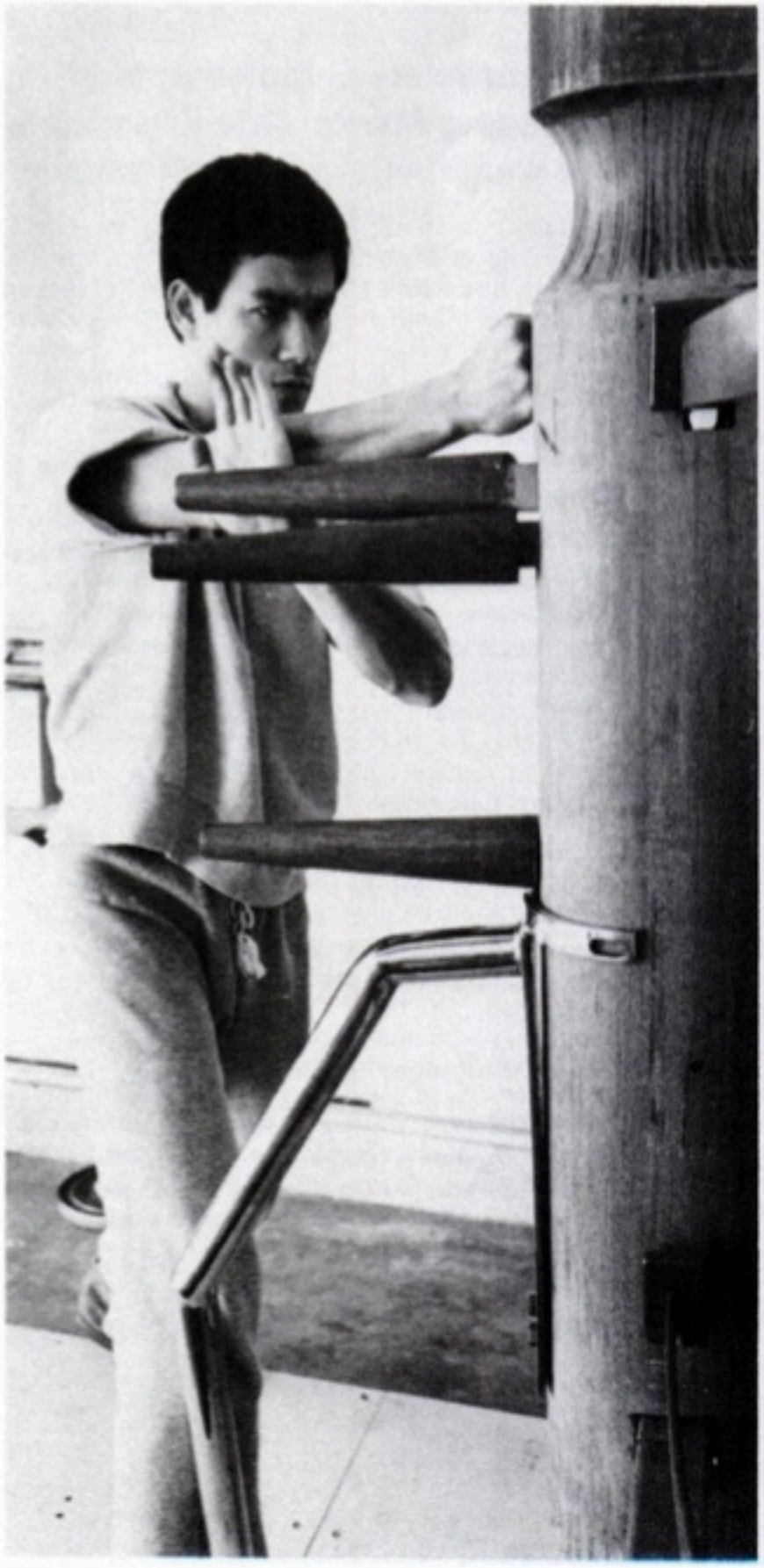
In our two previous issues, BLACK BELT brought you parts one and two of "Bruce Lee: The Oakland Years," an exclusive, detailed account of Bruce's first difficult years in the United States, acclimating and developing his own martial arts style. The material has been excerpted from an unpublished book manuscript containing over 1,000 pages of information about Bruce's day-to-day activities. It gives you a close, personal look at Bruce Lee that you will not find in any other magazine. In the first two parts (BLACK BELT, July and August 1986), we told you how a teenage Bruce Lee sailed to America from Hong Kong and settled in Seattle, eventually enrolling at the University of Washington while moonlighting as a kung fu instructor at his newly opened school. He developed a friendship with Oakland, California, martial artist James Yimm Lee, who was anxious to learn wing chun kung fu and coaxed Bruce into making frequent training trips to the Bay Area to teach him. James introduced Bruce to noted martial artists Ed Parker and Ralph Castro during one such junket and, in return, Bruce taught him all he knew about wing chun and later asked James to collaborate with him on opening a school in the Oakland area. This issue, Bruce continues with his expansion plans; returns to Hong Kong to visit his family and train with his wing chun instructor Yip Man; discovers he might be drafted into the army; and reveals his secret desire to marry his girlfriend Linda Emery. —Ed.

Oakland, Spring 1963

The Sunday morning after Bruce Lee announced his expansion plans to James Yimm Lee, the two martial artists began planning the details of converting the Hayward, California, school James shared with Al Novak into a "Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute" (Bruce Lee Kung Fu Institute). James was not sure how Al would feel about the idea, but after he explained to Novak all the benefits of such a conversion, James was sure Al would consent to the idea.

After much discussion, Bruce told James it was time he departed for Seattle so he could attend his classes at the University of Washington on Monday morning. As James saw Bruce off, he could hardly control the excitement he felt about the prospects of expanding the martial arts and developing a new concept in institutionalized instruction. Bruce's future was unlimited as he continued his unceasing effort to promote the real truth of martial arts and its deeply enriched philosophy. Only time would tell how big things would get.

As the week progressed, James made several trips out to the Hayward school. Al was a bit reluctant at first to see the name of the school changed and the style modified to ac-



The first time James Lee's assistant, Al Novak, saw Bruce Lee, the latter was viciously pounding on the wooden dummy in James' garage. Novak was impressed with Bruce's ability.

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commodate a new method he was not fully familiar with. James assured Al that he would teach him everything Bruce was teaching, as soon as he himself learned enough to be fully qualified to do so.

Several weeks later, James called Bruce at the Seattle *kwoon* (kung fu school) and told him the final proof sheets of the book they were collaborating on would be ready by the weekend. Bruce said he would travel down to Oakland that weekend with his assistant, Taky Kimura.

Bruce and Taky arrived Saturday morning. While James' wife, Katherine, prepared a nice breakfast, her husband took the opportunity to show Bruce the proof sheets of their martial arts book. Bruce was ecstatic the printing had turned out so well.

James then handed Bruce a replica of the finished book, and the latter looked at it from virtually every angle. Everybody laughed as Bruce imitated the mannerisms of an author. He would ask himself a question like he was being interviewed, and then answer in a very dignified way. Taky and James got into the act by asking him their own questions.

Bruce suddenly got serious as he stared at the book's front cover and read the words "By Bruce Lee." He then started smiling, and with a serious note to his voice, said "Well, I guess that makes me an author now, right?" He started laughing and James and Taky joined in.

Until late into the night, the trio was busy in the garage working on variations of the many different wing chun techniques and practicing the more advanced methods of utilizing *chi sao* (sticking hands) skills. Bruce was surprised that James adapted so well to the simple yet difficult entwining maneuvers while remaining in contact with Taky's extended punching arms. Although James did not have the speed and

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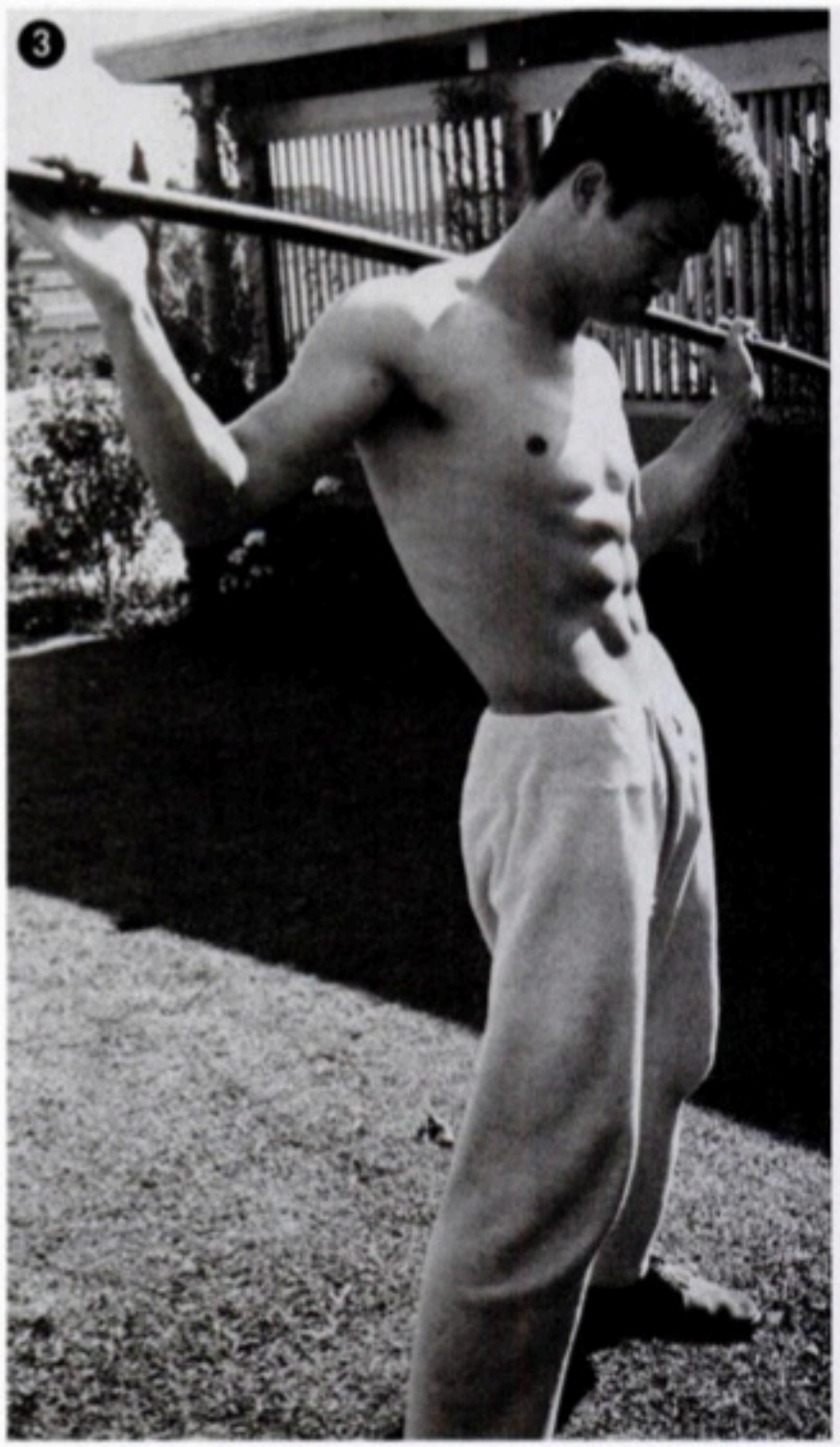

fluidity of Taky, he more than made up for it by applying more power to the techniques. Since James had always relied on power to make his techniques effective, it was difficult at times for him to appreciate the elements of speed Bruce and Taky were conveying. Bruce would tell James "Power is great provided you have time enough to make it work for you, but speed can be the most important weapon in your fighting arsenal."

By midnight, after more than four hours of continuous training in the garage, all three men were completely exhausted. Taky could see that James would be a very competent and able representative of the Jun Fan Gung Fu institute. For a man of 43 years, James could keep up the intensity of a long workout without tiring or becoming discouraged at the amount of work it took to master a sequence of techniques.

All day Sunday was spent going over the plans Bruce had for expanding the Hayward club to an institute. Each and every aspect of the operation was discussed in detail. James was more concerned with the smaller details, like enrollment procedures, hours of instruction the students would receive, etc. Bruce was looking at the larger, overall operation, such as coordinating activities between the two branches, insuring the quality of instructors, standardized requirements each student should know for a certain level of proficiency, and things of that nature.

Taky was helpful in making important suggestions on relationships with the students. Because he had been a student for the past several years, he was a bit more in touch with their feelings and demands. Taky knew the liabilities of hard training could force a student to quit if the workouts got

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Bruce was a fitness maniac, constantly training and exercising to stay in shape. He was renown for his two-finger push-ups (1). Check out the muscle definition in his arm as he practices punching (2). He used a number of makeshift implements to work on his upper-body definition (3) and his arm muscles (4).

too rough before he or she was ready to accept it. Bruce liked to get right into hard training, and if the students couldn't handle the workouts, it was their tough luck. Taky knew that policy would not work from a purely commercial standpoint.

James was interested in how the finances and remuneration for training services would be handled. Bruce was quick to explain that he wanted everything to be on a 50-50 basis. Each assistant instructor owned his own branch, and after the bills were paid, everything would be split evenly. Taky intervened on several occasions to give James a clear picture of the growth prospects possible within the organization. James could see that his collaboration with Bruce had possibilities of turning into something really big. If Bruce had his way, James thought, he could possibly have a branch school in every major city. James knew if anyone could do something like that, it was definitely Bruce Lee.

Bruce returned to Seattle that night, but he received a call from James two weeks later. James told him the book was ready and that it really looked good. Bruce was so excited that he told James he would immediately drive back down to Oakland to pick up the copies personally.

It was only 5:30 in the morning when Bruce pulled into James' driveway, but his host was already up and dressed. While James made a pot of tea, Bruce sat quietly reading every single page of his book. He reread some passages over and over until he had convinced himself that he had indeed written them. Finally, Bruce stood up and shouted "It's great! We have done it!"

James' wife, Katherine, entered the living room and offered her congratulations. Bruce quickly stood up and shook her hand. In dignified fashion, and in a low, baritone voice, he said "Thank you, madame. It's a pleasure and an honor to be received so graciously. Do you want my autograph now or later?" Everybody laughed as Bruce played out the part of a famous author making his literary debut.

James and Bruce then got down to discussing plans for the Hayward Jun Fan Institute. Bruce went out to his car and brought in a worn attache case. He pulled out a packet of typed programs of the operation of his small kwoon in Seattle. Everything they had discussed during Bruce's last visit was artfully arranged in a business-plan format: ranking, promotional dates, and a flow chart showing the organization of students and instructors.

By evening, they had covered virtually every aspect of philosophy and teaching plans for the institute. It had been one long and educational day for James. In fact, this was the first time that he and Bruce had chosen not to work out together, but had concentrated all of their efforts on the mental aspects of their shared art.

The next morning, both men headed for the garage to train. James had his work cut out for him. There was not a close-range technique Bruce did not teach him. The whole day was spent drilling, drilling and drilling until James could do the movements without thinking. James could not remember when he had worked so hard at achieving proficiency at something.

The following morning, Bruce was up early for the return trip to Seattle. As he departed, James promised him that he would do everything in his power to implement the plans they had discussed regarding the Hayward school.

Bruce returned to Seattle to concentrate on his final exams at the University of Washington. The best he could hope for was a "C" average. He felt that was not too bad for the amount of time he had studied, which had not been much considering all of the other things he had accomplished during the school year.

Right before the classes at the university concluded, Bruce called home to Hong Kong to make arrangements for a month-long summer vacation there. This would be the first time he had been home since he had come to the United States in 1959—almost four years without seeing his mother, father and relatives.

The final two weeks of school passed rather slowly, but

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before Bruce knew it, he was landing in Hong Kong. He was pleased to have such a dedicated assistant instructor in Taky that he could afford to take this much-needed vacation without having to worry about his kwoon and the teaching duties.

Bruce spent almost the whole first week in Hong Kong visiting old friends. His family was amazed at the regularity of his martial arts workouts. He was up early every morning training in techniques and physical exercises, running, and shadow sparring. His family had never seen him so concerned about these things before.

Bruce's father, Lee Hoi Chuen, was not overly enthused about his son's career plans of teaching the martial arts for a living. He himself was a very popular entertainer with the Chinese opera, and he had never taken Bruce's martial arts training seriously. In fact, he never wanted Bruce to become involved in the study of kung fu in the first place. Hoi Chuen

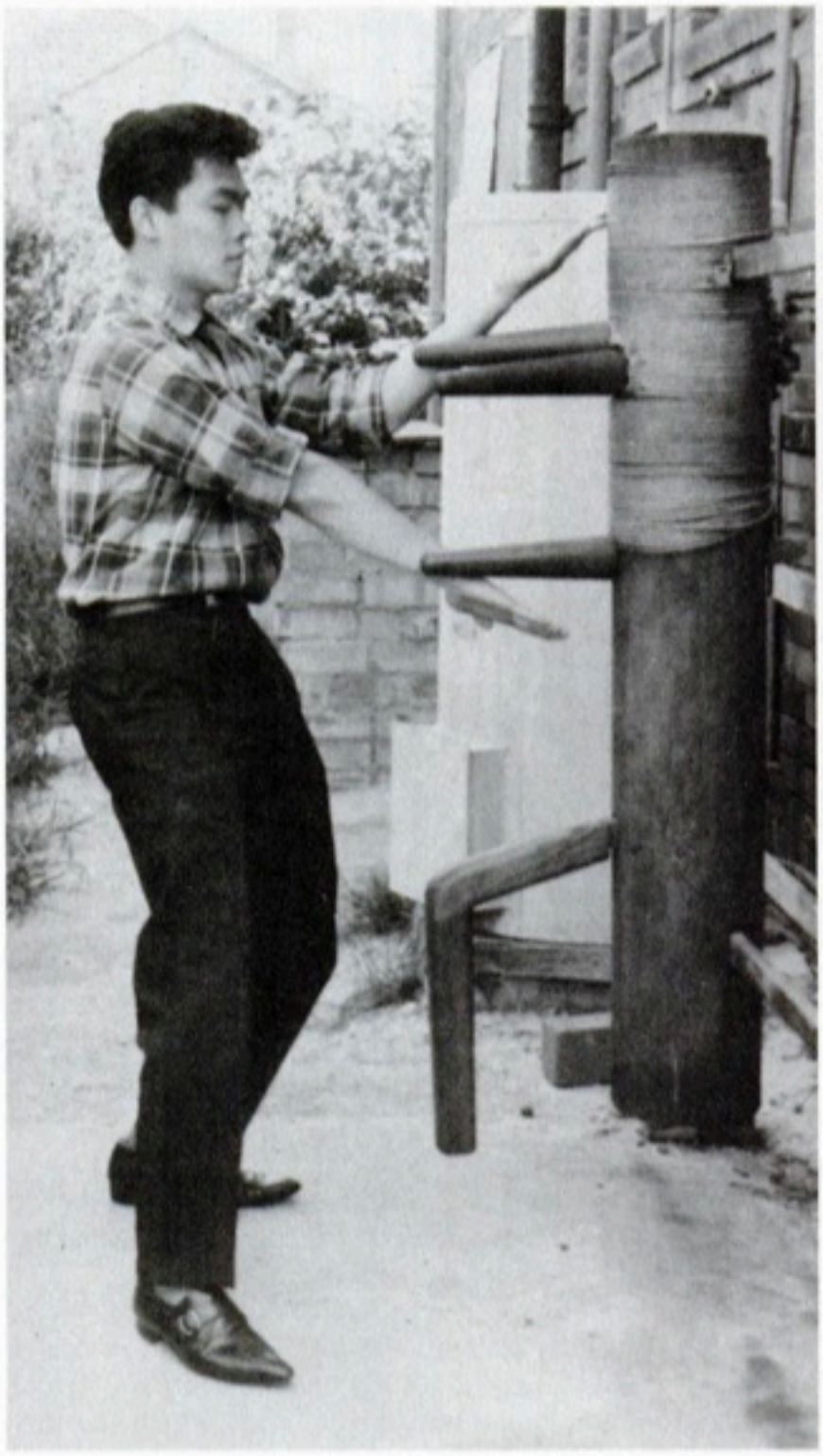

Photo courtesy of William Cheung

During his 1963 vacation to Hong Kong, Bruce dropped in on his wing chun instructor Yip Man, and the two of them conducted "sticky hands" practice (above). Bruce was impressed with the old man's ability. Bruce also ran into his old friend, William Cheung (left), while visiting Yip's school.

knew martial arts trends come and go and that one's financial security will always be at the mercy of those trends. Bruce and his father had many disagreements on these points and there were times when Bruce felt he should pack his bags and head back to Seattle.

Grace Lee, Bruce's mother, would often have to intervene to stop a family argument before it would turn into a fight. She hated to see her husband and son act that way toward one another, but knew that these rivalries had been going on ever since Bruce was a child. Her efforts were the key factor that kept Bruce from leaving Hong Kong to return to the United States.

One afternoon, Bruce borrowed the family automobile and decided to pay a visit to his wing chun instructor. He hoped Yip Man would be happy to see him and hear of his progress in spreading the word of wing chun in the U.S. It had been over five years since he had last seen Yip.

Bruce and Yip spent several hours over tea discussing the style. Yip was very helpful in enlightening Bruce on the more-specific and less-obvious aspects of wing chun. Bruce already knew the wing chun style had been developed by a Shaolin nun by the name of Ng Mui. She had named it after one of her pupils, Yim Wing Chun. Yip informed Bruce that the style was then passed down to Leung Bok Chau, Wong Wah Bo, Leung Yee Tai, Leung Jan, Chan Wah Shun, and then to Yip.

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Photo courtesy of Gregion Lee

If Bruce was going to expand into California, he was going to need the help of Al Novak (left above) and James Lee (right above), who shared a kung fu school in Hayward, California.

Bruce jotted down all of this information on a small notepad.

Bruce respected Yip more now than he ever did when he was a teenager under his tutelage. At that time, he had shown very little respect for his instructor and thought that someone as old as Yip could not possibly still defend himself. But as Bruce and Yip practiced chi sao techniques that day, the former could readily tell his instructor still had what it took to take care of himself. The thousands upon thousands of hours of chi sao practice were indelibly printed in Yip's mind and strongly emphasized in his movements. He could have worn a blindfold and still known what movements Bruce was attempting. Yip was pleased Bruce had turned out to be such a wonderful young man, and he was proud his student had continued to train in wing chun.

That afternoon, several of Bruce's former classmates dropped by Yip's kwoon for a practice session. They were as surprised to see Bruce as he was to see them. The first to recognize Bruce was William Cheung, one of Yip's senior students. William had taken Bruce into his confidence when they were younger and taught him many of the basic wing chun maneuvers. In fact, at the kwoon, William had been known as Bruce's older brother because of the way the latter followed William around. They hugged one another as if they were truly long lost brothers.

By coincidence, William was vacationing from Australia, where he had introduced wing chun at the age of 18. The two friends spent the greater part of the evening talking about martial arts and exchanging techniques. They both realized that the skills Yip had taught them were partially responsible for their mutual success in the two different countries.

The following day, Grace Lee thought it would be a good idea if Bruce and Lee Hoi Chuen sat down and tried to settle their differences in a diplomatic way. For the better part of an hour they discussed some of the plans Bruce had made for himself. Bruce was very intense as he explained his love for the martial arts. At one point in the conversation, Bruce wanted to demonstrate some of his martial arts skills to prove to his father that he was exceptional at the art of kung fu.

They went into the backyard and engaged in some close-range trapping techniques. Although this display did little to settle the dispute, Bruce realized his dad had his own reasons for thinking the way he did. But as far as Bruce was concerned, no one was going to tell him how to live his life.

After five weeks in Hong Kong, Bruce was anxious to return to Seattle and tend to his teaching duties at the kwoon. The long flight home gave him ample time to evaluate what his father had said. It was Bruce's belief that the martial arts were just catching on in the United States, whereas they had been commonplace in the Orient for several thousand years. Bruce surmised he was simply ahead of his time in this respect and he was determined to prove he could make a success of the venture.

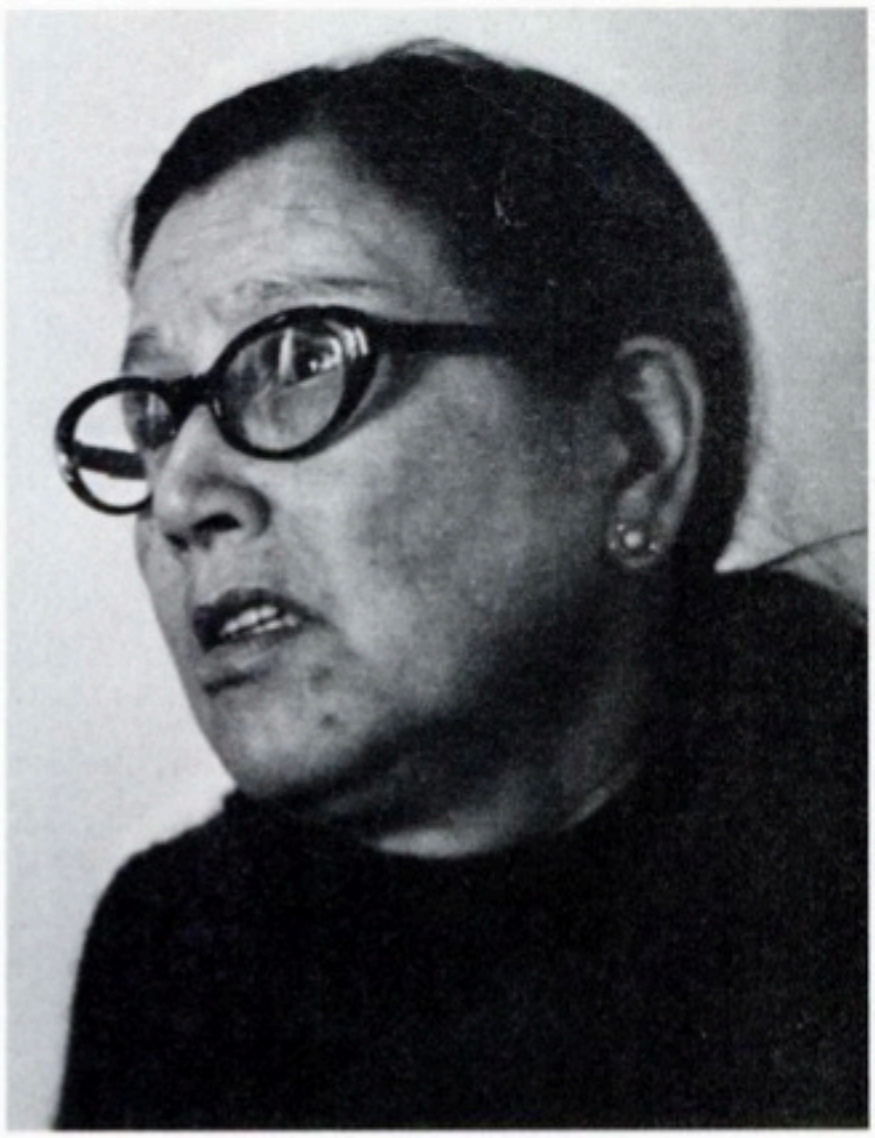
When Bruce returned to his small Seattle apartment, he noticed a large stack of letters had been slid under the door. He wasted no time in opening them. One that immediately caught his eye was addressed from the United States Army. He quickly opened it and discovered there was the distinct possibility he could be drafted into the service. It didn't take him long to realize that if he were drafted, it would mean the end to his immediate plans.

Another letter that caught his eye was addressed from the United States Department of Immigration. He opened it to discover that his student draft deferment had been revoked. After careful consideration, he came to the conclusion that the deferment had been revoked so there was no possibility of him leaving the country in the event he was eligible to be drafted into the U.S. Army.

The third letter he opened was an order to report to the Seattle Induction Center for evaluation of his eligibility for induction into the military. All of these letters put Bruce in a depressed state and he was unsure of the immediate future.

The third week in July, 1963, found Bruce taking a phone call from James at the kwoon in Seattle. James was a little distraught to learn Bruce might be drafted into the army.

Continued on page 76



While in Hong Kong, Bruce got into constant arguments with his father about teaching martial arts for a living. Bruce's mother, Grace (above), often intervened to quell the fighting.

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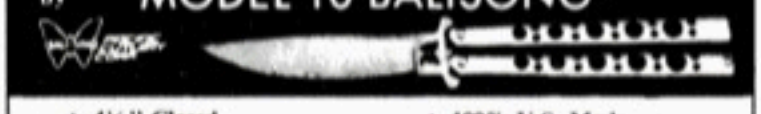

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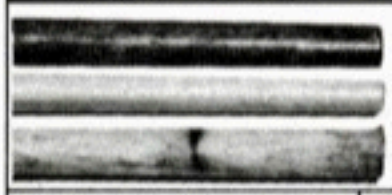

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BRUCE LEE

Continued from page 31

Bruce wanted to travel to Oakland that weekend and go over more details about the Hayward kwoon and also get in some advanced training with James. This was something James was very agreeable to. He was in need of some minor technical corrections on the second and third wing chun forms.

Saturday morning, as promised, Bruce pulled into James' driveway in Oakland. In the living room, Bruce told James about the form letter he received ordering him to report to the Seattle Induction Center on September 5. Since Bruce knew James had served in the army during World War II, he asked for his advice on how to avoid induction.

Bruce listened carefully as James told him how some people faked an injury or psychological disabilities to avoid the draft. He even mentioned that some people put soap under their armpits to raise their blood pressure so they would be rejected. The more radical ways, although they didn't appeal to Bruce, included young men who actually cut off their trigger finger with a knife or hatchet.

James knew Bruce was not capable of doing any of these things. His excellent physical condition, sharp mind, and trim body were everything the United States Army wanted from a potential recruit.

James changed the subject to martial arts, and Bruce suggested they work on the wing chun forms. In a matter of minutes, Bruce had turned from a talkative conversationalist to a

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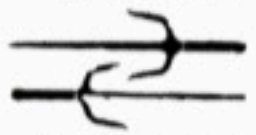

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stern taskmaster. Every time James would make the slightest mistake in the sequences of movements, Bruce would stop him, make a correction, and then have him start the set from the very beginning. By that evening, James estimated he had performed the three sets over 1,000 times.

The following morning, James called Al Novak and arranged for him to come to Oakland that day so he and Bruce could talk about converting the Hayward school into a branch of the Jun Fan Institute. When Al arrived, he found Bruce and James training in the garage. Al observed Bruce viciously and artifully pound the modified *mook jong* (training dummy) James had built and was definitely impressed with the power and speed of this small, slender man.

James introduced Al to Bruce and the three men began discussing the potential expansion of the Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute. Both Al and James chose to listen as Bruce presented his ideas like he was the chairman of the board. James had heard a lot of these same plans at previous sittings, but many of these concepts were new to Al.

Any differences of opinion were resolved by that afternoon, but Bruce knew Al would have to think about the plans a great deal more before he would commit to the expansion. He was a bit more reserved and cautious than James in this respect. Rather than trying to act like a salesman, after explaining all of the minute details of the plan, Bruce said "Well, everybody think about it; there's no rush."

That evening, Bruce packed and returned to Seattle. The first week of September, he reported for a physical examination at the induction center. He assumed that, considering his excellent physical condition, there was little chance of his being rejected. But after his examination, he was shocked to discover he had been classified as 4-F, which in

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essence meant he was ineligible for military service.

The medical examiners had determined that Bruce had high foot arches, very poor eyesight, and a sinus condition. Other potential inductees, who were somewhat out of shape, had passed their examinations with flying colors. This seemed strange to Bruce, but he was relieved that he had been classified 4-F. He had never thought much about his vision since it was corrected by glasses, and on occasion, when his sinuses would act up, he would use an inhaler prescribed by his doctor.

The following week, Bruce re-enrolled in the university for his fourth year. Although he considered himself independent in many ways, he was not as financially secure as he would have liked. Some big decisions would have to be made this year.

> ***"Bruce mentioned to James that he had met a beautiful blonde girl named Linda Emery and was dating her."***

The next month seemed to fly by. Bruce thought it would be a good idea to drive down to Oakland at his first opportunity and make more arrangements toward getting the second school under way. He arranged to visit James over the Christmas holidays. During the course of their conversation, Bruce mentioned that he had met a beautiful blonde girl named Linda Emery and was dating her. James suggested Bruce bring Linda down to the Bay Area with him, but Bruce was sure her parents wouldn't allow their daughter to leave the state with someone she had just met. Continued on page 86

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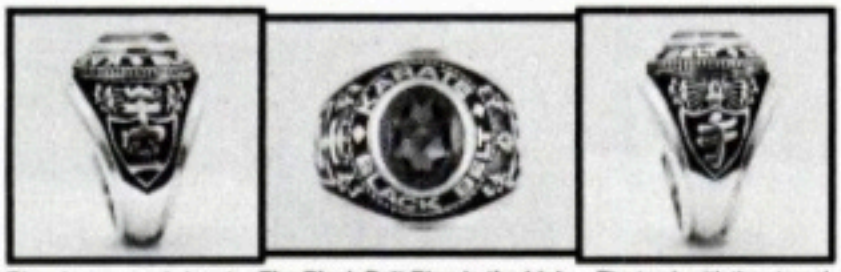

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BB

BRUCE LEE

Continued from page 80

Bruce chose to fly to Oakland for a change, and he was met at the airport by his old friend Allen Joe, who had been responsible for bringing James and Bruce together to train several years earlier. Back at James' house, the conversation quickly turned to the martial arts.

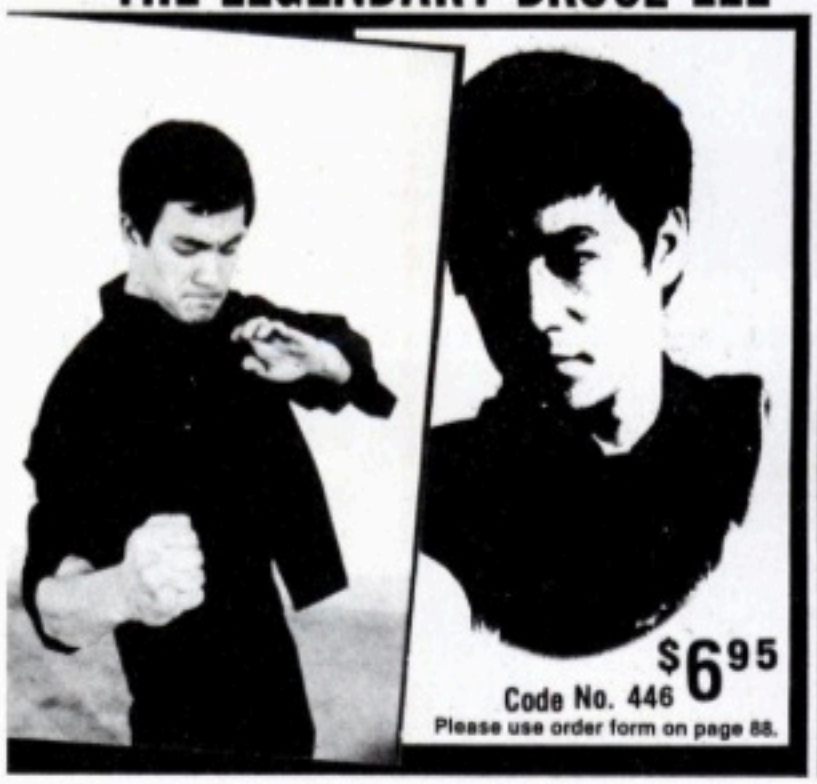
The threesome broke up several hours later and Bruce took the opportunity to call his new girlfriend and let her know he had arrived safely in Oakland. As Bruce expected, she was worried since she had not heard from him. Bruce assured her everything was OK.

After the call, Bruce told James more about Linda. "She is one of the very few women I have met that really stimulates my interest," he said. "She is beautiful, educated, amusing, has a nice personality, and she even likes the martial arts." James laughed out loud. He knew that if any woman was going to date Bruce, she was definitely going to have an interest in kung fu.

Bruce related that he met Linda when she had attended one of his kung fu classes after encouragement by one of her friends, who was already a member of the club. "She really has her act together for a senior high school student," Bruce told James. "You know what she wants to be when she finishes college? A doctor. That's something, Huh?" James agreed that to have a woman like that was a one-in-a-million shot.

James could tell Bruce was serious about the relationship

THE LEGENDARY BRUCE LEE



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with this young lady. When he inquired about the possibility of Bruce getting married to this woman, the latter responded with a resounding "There's that possibility! There has never been a lady that I have dated that has affected me this way. If we do get married, I think I'll have to do a lot of convincing to her parents. I'm not sure if they are into mixed marriages or not. But it's not the color of the skin or the nationality that makes for a good relationship, it's how people feel about one another."

Before, during, and after almost every workout session over the holidays, Bruce talked about Linda. It was like he was obsessed with her. This was a sure sign, James imagined, that his instructor was lovestruck. James made it clear to Bruce that if he did decide to get married and needed someone to guide him along that path, not to hesitate in asking his assistance. Since Bruce had not approached Linda about such matters, he was not really sure if he would need the advice in the first place.

It was clear to James, however, that Bruce was excited about the relationship, and just knowing Bruce the way he did, more than likely, there was nothing that could stop him from getting what he wanted. A wife included.

Next Issue: part four of "Bruce Lee: The Oakland Years." Bruce takes a bride, moves to Oakland, and begins to consider a career in acting.

About the Authors: Greglon Lee, son of the late James Yimm Lee, lives in Berkeley, California, and credits Bay Area martial artist Felix Macias for inspiring him to write The Oakland Years. *Sid Campbell runs an Okinawan karate school in Oakland.*

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BRUCE LEE

THE OAKLAND YEARS—Conclusion

The Dragon Goes to Hollywood

Photo courtesy of National General Pictures

"The way Bruce held Linda close and affectionately kissed her on the cheek from time to time, it was obvious to James they were deeply in love."

by Greglon Lee and Sid Campbell

In our three previous issues, BLACK BELT brought you parts one through three of "Bruce Lee: The Oakland Years," an exclusive personal account of Bruce's first seven years in the United States, acclimating to American culture and developing as a martial artist. The material has been excerpted from an unpublished book manuscript containing over 1,000 pages of information about Bruce's day-to-day activities from 1959-66. The authors, Greglon Lee and Sid Campbell, have gone to great lengths to give you an inside, close-up look at Bruce you will not find in any other magazine.

In the first three parts (BLACK BELT, July, August and September, 1986), you read how a teenage Bruce Lee was sent by his parents from Hong Kong to America in the hope he would make something of himself and change his incorrigible ways. Bruce settled with family friends in Seattle and soon was teaching wing chun kung fu at his own school. He developed a close friendship with Oakland, California, martial artist James Yimm Lee, and the latter coaxed Bruce into making regular trips to the Bay Area to teach him wing chun. It was during one of these trips that Bruce was introduced to noted kenpo karate stylist Ed Parker, who would later play a significant role in Bruce's future. Bruce and James soon began searching for a suitable location to open a wing chun school in Oakland. During the course of one of their training sessions, Bruce informed James that he had met a beautiful blonde woman named Linda Emery and was dating her. James could tell Bruce was bitten by the love bug and felt there was the distinct possibility that his friend would soon be getting married. His suspicions proved correct when Bruce told him of his impending marriage. Knowing his friend had little money for a honeymoon, James offered to put Bruce and Linda up in Oakland, and suggested to Bruce that the couple stay on afterward so Bruce and James could get the Oakland kung fu school going. Bruce accepted the offer, quit his classes at the University of Seattle, sold his car, and he and Linda held a small wedding ceremony in Seattle. Immediately afterward, the newlyweds boarded a plane for Oakland to begin their life together. Little did they know of the many adventures that lay ahead. —*Ed.*

Naturally, the wife of Bruce Lee was no pushover when it came to the martial arts. Bruce taught her a thing or two while the pair were living in Oakland with James Lee's family.

August, 1964

As Bruce Lee and his new wife, Linda, walked through the narrow, crowded San Francisco Airport corridors to the baggage area, Bruce was exuberant and visibly animated as he told his close friend, James Yimm Lee, of all the wedding festivities that had occurred during that eventful day. The way Bruce held Linda close and affectionately kissed her on the cheek from time to time, it was obvious to James that they were deeply in love.

After retrieving their luggage, Bruce and Linda were chauffered by James to his home in Oakland. James' wife, Katherine, greeted them at the door and warmly ushered them inside. Katherine had often thought Bruce would make some lucky lady a wonderful husband, and he had a right to be proud of such a seemingly lovable Caucasian woman. While James and Bruce moved some of the clothes from the closet in the guest bedroom to the master bedroom, Linda and Katherine rearranged some of the furniture to accommodate the two guests.

That evening, James thought it appropriate to take Linda and Bruce to Chinatown to celebrate their wedding. During the nine-course dinner, Bruce talked about some of the obstacles he had to overcome in getting Linda's mother to consent to their marriage.

Bruce explained that because it was a "mixed" marriage, "Linda's mother had been really upset when we first broke the news of our plans to get married. She was a bit leery about the problems the children would ultimately face as they grew up. I told her there was nothing to worry about. I don't know why she was so upset! We were meant for one another. When we have children, they will be a result of our love for one another.

"I could understand her reasoning because she wants Lin-

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"Bruce was relentless when it came to perfecting his martial skills. He felt that if he was going to teach, he had to be in twice the shape of the students."

da to be a doctor and she felt that marriage could ruin those plans," Bruce continued. "In fact, Vivian (Linda's mother) is still a bit skeptical that we are not meant for each other. But we're going to show everyone that we can make this marriage work."

By 11:00 p.m., everyone was ready to depart. It had been a long day—a wedding in Seattle, a jet airplane ride to Oakland, unpacking, and a fabulous dinner in Chinatown. Now it was time to get comfortable in the new environment of the Monticello Avenue home.

The following morning, James was in the living room reading the Sunday paper when Bruce entered, attired in a robe and slippers. "Did you have a good honeymoon last night?" James asked.

A broad smile appeared on Bruce's face. "Hell yeah! Got to make a family, you know!"

James laughed as he taunted Bruce about the honeymoon night.

Soon the joking conversation had turned to one of a more serious nature. Bruce was anxious about getting a *kwoon* (kung fu school) open in Oakland. He wanted to start earning some income and supporting Linda and himself.

"The first thing we've got to do is get a functionable location with a minimum of overhead," Bruce said. "We don't have to have a big place, just a place to work out in and get some students started. We can open just like the way I started in Seattle—get a small place and then build up."

The pair immediately began the tedious job of calling real estate agents and private owners of commercial buildings in the Oakland area. Forty-five minutes later, their efforts had paid off: they had found a building suitable to their needs and

***After his strange challenge match at the kung fu school, Bruce looked into boxing and began incorporating it into his training. It was the beginning of what would become known as* jeet kune do.**

Photo courtesy of Greglon Lee

Between training sessions and teaching kung fu classes, Bruce found some time for fun while he and his wife Linda were staying in Oakland. During lighter moments he: watches (1) as James Lee blows out the candles on his birthday cake; butchers meat (2) at Allen Joe's market; and clowns around (3) with James.

arranged to meet the real estate agent at the location.

They arrived before the realtor and looked through the front plate-glass windows to determine if the building would suit their humble needs. To James, it appeared a bit small for a kung fu kwoon, but he could tell, provided the price was right, that Bruce had already made up his mind and would take it.

The realtor arrived and let them into the vacant building. While Bruce looked around and tried to imagine how the space could best be utilized as a kung fu school, James was busy discussing the terms of the lease with the agent. "Only $150 per month!" was the price he finally quoted to James, who felt it was reasonable. Bruce had overheard the rental price and it also sounded good to him. After several minutes of serious deliberation, James and Bruce approached the agent and told him they would take the place.

The two martial artists remained on the premises for another hour after signing the lease and receiving keys, looking over the building. It needed a lot of work. An office-space partition would have to be built, the walls would have to be painted, the partially carpeted area would have to be removed, and some furniture and office equipment would have to be acquired if it was going to look like a martial arts studio. They decided to start on the project the following weekend.

Bruce was still not sure what he wanted to charge for his classes, but from conversations with San Francisco *kenpo* stylist Ralph Castro and with James, the going rate seemed to be in the area of $15 per month. Even though Bruce thought his services were definitely worth more than that, he felt if he charged too much, there was the possibility he would scare the students away, even though they might have liked what they saw. He realized that if his reputation grew like he expected, he could then raise the rates.

While James was at his welding job during the week, Bruce spent much of his time in the garage training on the *mook jong* (wooden dummy). Bruce was relentless when it

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Photo courtesy of Greglon Lee

came to perfecting and sharpening his martial skills. He felt that if he was going to teach, he had to be in twice the shape of the students he was instructing. Linda found it difficult to understand the driving force behind his obsessed actions. She knew, however, that ever since she had first met him at the Seattle kwoon, he was driven by the desire to be the best kung fu expert in the world.

Bruce was anxious to get the new kwoon open so he would be bringing in an income and would not have to feel so guilty about staying at James' house without contributing monetarily. James didn't seem to mind, however. "Don't worry about it," he told Bruce. "What's mine is yours. That's what friends are for. You and Linda are free to stay here as long as you like."

Saturday finally arrived and Bruce and James were up early loading the trunk and backseat of James' Plymouth with training equipment and small file cabinets. Bruce paced in and out of the house looking for other things that could be added to the assorted devices employed in a typical martial arts establishment.

After moving all the furniture and equipment into the school, the two men got to work painting the interior. On the door, in English and in Chinese writing, Bruce carefully printed the words "The Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute." (Jun Fan was Bruce's Chinese name, and gung fu was his preferred spelling and enunciation of kung fu.)

Bruce and James returned to the kwoon the next morning, and brought Linda along. The crispness and fresh smell of paint, plus the bamboo shades James had hung on the inside of the windows, made the school appear more like a quasi-private club than a commercial operation.

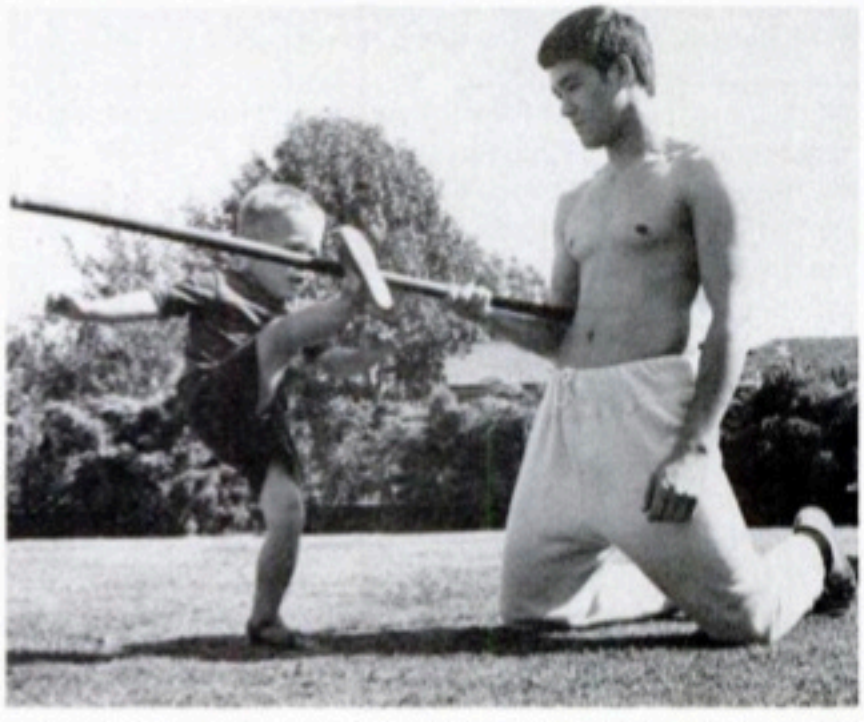
After several hours arranging furniture and cleaning the floors, the three Lees went to lunch. When they returned to the kwoon, Bruce was surprised to see several young men peering in the window. James surmised they were servicemen because of the way their hair was cut. He also noticed they all had tattoos on their arms indicating they were, or had been, in the Marines.

The three men followed Bruce, James and Linda into the school. James opened the dialog: "You guys interested in learning kung fu?"

"Yeah!" came the reply from the larger of the three. "We had a little self-defense instruction in San Diego while in boot camp."

"Well this is Chinese gung fu, the ultimate in self-defense," Bruce interjected.

The marines appeared to assume James was the instructor because of his greater age, and that the youthful fellow who had just spoken was perhaps one of his students. "Well, we were taught some pretty deadly stuff in camp," said the



After his son Brandon was born, Bruce wasted little time in getting him started in the martial arts. Here, he works with Brandon on his kicking. Brandon is presently pursuing a film career.

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"Bam! Just like a gun going off, Bruce unleashed one of his three-inch punches. The marine flew back across the linoleum floor and lost his balance."

It was Bruce's now-famous nunchaku and one-inch punch demonstration (above) at Ed Parker's Long Beach Internationals that eventually excited television producers enough to give him the role of "Kato" (above right) in* The Green Hornet *series.

biggest marine. "Could we see you or your instructor demonstrate some of this Chinese gung fu?"

"Sure! You bet!" Bruce answered confidently. Bruce asked the larger of the three to position himself in a fighting stance. Before he knew what had happened, Bruce burst loose with three precise front snap kicks to the startled marine's face. All three missed by only fractions of an inch. The speed at which the kicks had been delivered was so incredible that the young fellow had not begun to react until the last one was returning to the floor.

After a moment, the big marine said "Damn! Where did you learn that?"

"Oh, it was nothing. Just basic practice," Bruce replied. "Our beginners learn those types of things in the first several weeks."

As the marines looked at one another in dismay, Bruce decided to press the point by performing another demonstration. "I tell you what," Bruce said to the big marine. "I will hold a cushion in front of my chest and you throw your strongest kick or punch into it."

The marine turned and winked at his buddies as he prepared to execute his most powerful kick at the cushion Bruce was holding. "Wham!" Bruce was only moved back about eight or ten inches. His hair had been mussed from the impact, but he was still smiling as if nothing had happened.

He then handed the small seat cushion to the marine. "Now I'll show you my kick! No, I'll just use a little punch. Is that OK with you?"

"Sure! Shoot your best shot!" the marine replied.

Bruce positioned the marine and told him to get ready. Suddenly, "Bam!" just like a gun going off, Bruce had unleashed one of his three-inch punches. The marine flew back across the linoleum floor and lost his balance. Bruce ran over and helped him up. "Oh, I'm so sorry," Bruce said. "I thought you were ready."

The other two marines were in a state of disbelief. How could someone so slender and short hit with that much power? It seemed to defy the laws of physics.

The next 20 minutes were spent with the three fellows filling out enrollment applications.

That night, Bruce and James discussed ways to attract students. James suggested calling up all of the students who

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"While things were looking up at the kwoon, tragedy struck at home—James Lee learned that his wife, Katherine, was dying of breast cancer."

had attended the Hayward, California, school he used to share with Al Novak, plus those James used to teach out of his garage. James assured Bruce that many of them would enroll at the kwoon. An hour later, James had been successful in getting 13 additional students interested in joining Bruce's kung fu class. Many of them had seen Bruce perform some techniques at James' house before. Some were even waiting until the new school had opened and were going to join anyway.

Several days later, Bruce conducted the first class. Anticipation was running high and everyone was excited, as well as curious, to find out how Bruce was going to teach his classes. After the introductions, Bruce wasted no time in assuming command of the somewhat informal group. Linda had prepared packages of printed matter containing the historical and philosophical details of the school, plus training schedules, and handed them out to the students. Bruce then gave a short philosophical presentation. Afterward, he started his formal workout regimen with 20 minutes of warm-ups: jumping jacks, sit-ups, push-ups, leg stretches, leg raises, etc. The rest of the class consisted of basic wing chun punching drills and an assortment of basic deflecting/blocking maneuvers.

By the end of the evening, everyone in the class had a good idea of what Bruce was expecting from them. He definitely wanted them to be the best martial artists they could possibly be. There was something about working out hard that made the body feel really good after it was over. Bruce was well aware of this feeling and wanted every student in the class to know it firsthand.

On the way back to James' house that night, Bruce was excited that the enrollment fees had been greater than he had expected. In only two-and-a-half hours, he had made $180.

Each ensuing class was always different. James liked the way the training varied, because it gave some muscles a chance to rest while others were being bought into play. The diversity of drills, he realized, would help keep the students from getting bored with the mundaneness of basic fundamentals.

While things were looking up at the kwoon, tragedy struck at home—James learned that Katherine had breast cancer. Bruce's lighthearted personality helped keep everyone's spirits up. He told James not to worry, that Katherine's spirit was so strong, and her determination so intense, that there was no way she could not help from beating the cancer. The support he and Linda contributed helped keep things running smoothly around the house.

After three weeks of radiation treatment, however, it was obvious the therapy was not helping Katherine. The cancer was so widespread throughout her body that it could not be arrested unless greater doses of radiation were administered. And by law, they were already at the legal limit that was

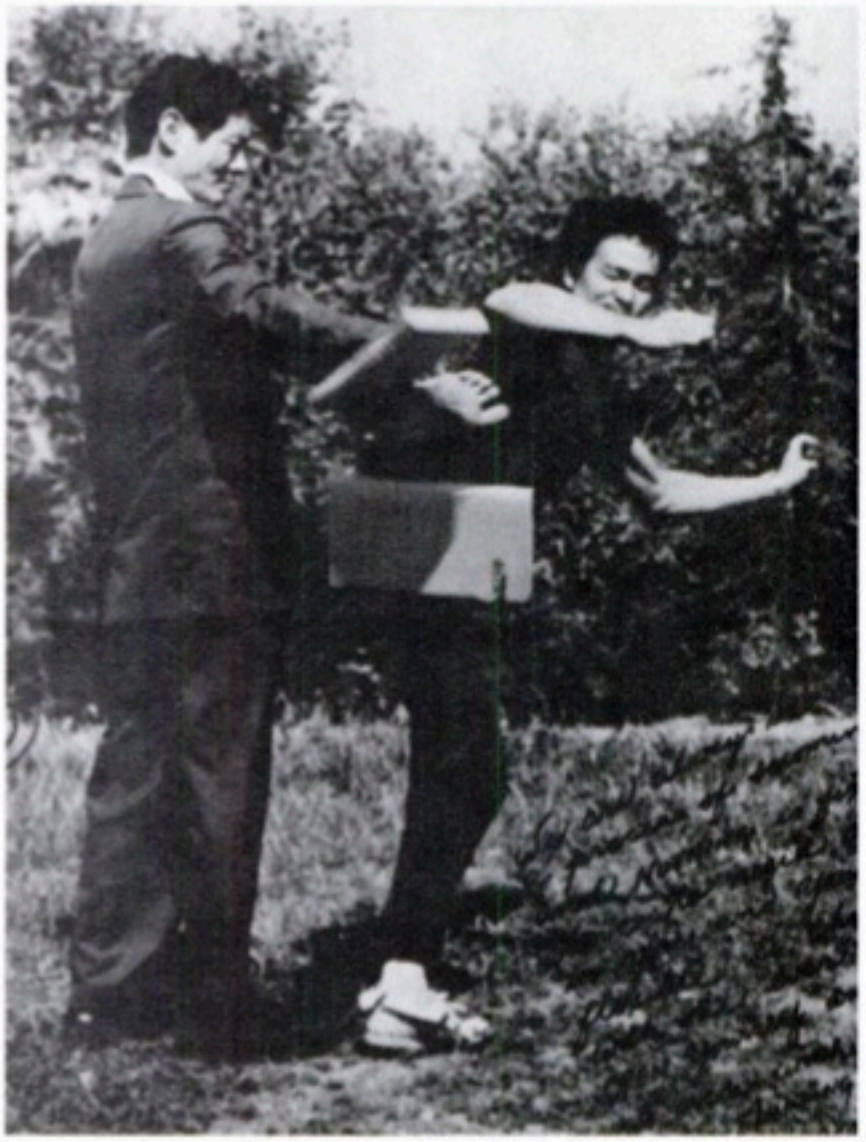

Photo courtesy of Greglon Lee

Bruce did not become a breaking enthusiast until he met James Lee. Here, he breaks a board in half that James is holding. James knew at this point that he was dying of cancer, but he kept the information to himself and didn't let on to Bruce.

safe for a cancer patient.

The attitude around the house became more solemn with each passing day. Linda virtually became the guiding force around the house, keeping James' two junior high-aged children calm and taking care of all of the everyday chores. While she was busy with the many tasks around the home, James and Bruce were busy on their fronts. After work, James was spending several hours each night comforting Katherine at the hospital. Bruce was teaching regularly at the kwoon, trying to convey his art without appearing emotionally drawn into the crisis James was experiencing.

On October 2, 1964, Katherine drifted into a coma. For three days, James went virtually without sleep as he sat next to the small bed holding his wife's hand, hoping she would suddenly wake up and assure him that she was OK, that it had been a bad dream.

Then, suddenly, on October 5, a chilling coldness swept over Katherine's body, and James knew his wife had passed away.

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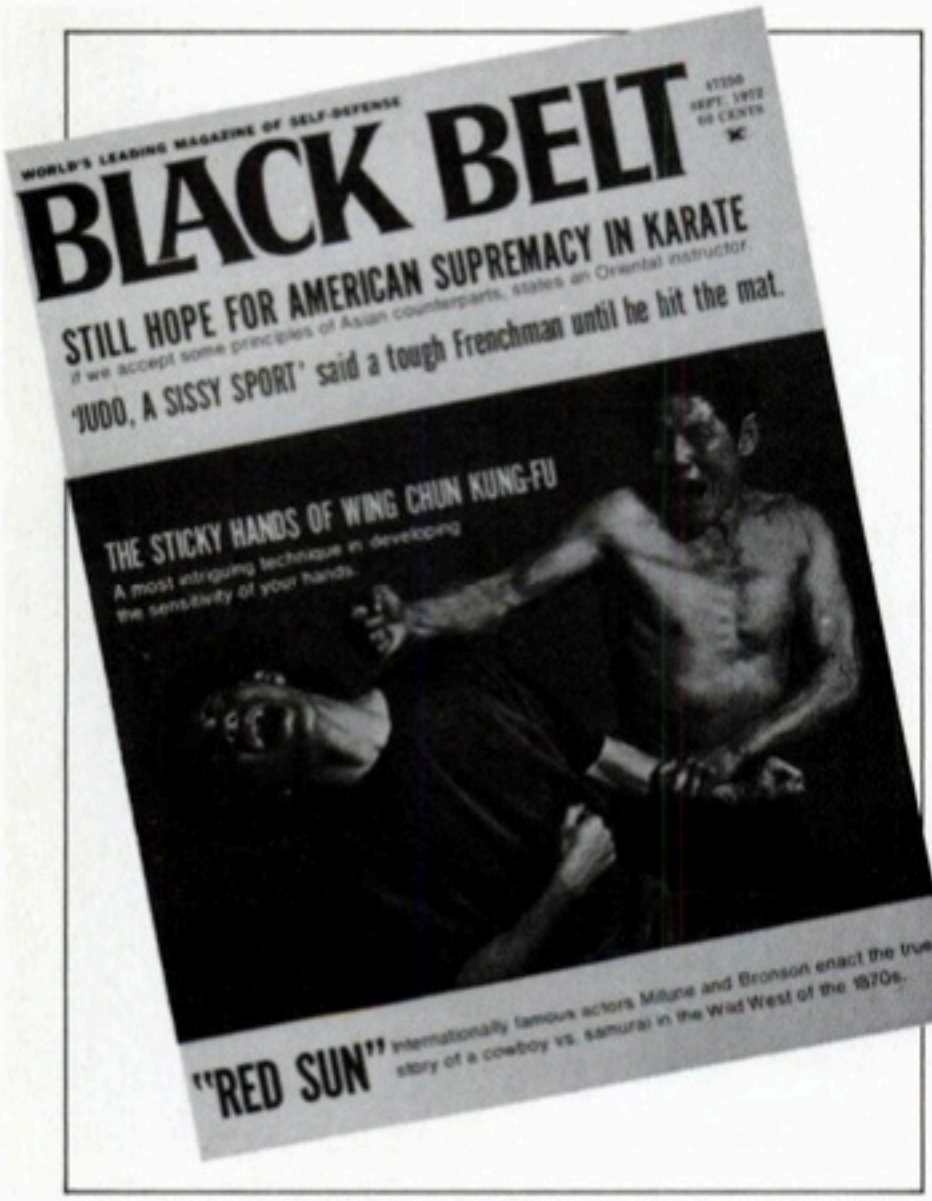
"'You don't like me teaching Caucasians, huh?' Bruce said. 'I'll teach who I choose. Nobody comes into my kung fu kwoon and tells me what to do!'"



Before he died in 1972, James Lee (right above) appeared on the cover of the September, 1972, BLACK BELT. With Bruce's help, he also wrote a wing chun book for Ohara Publications.

Bruce was effective in helping James get over the loss and restore confidence in himself. He encouraged his host to get into an intensive workout regimen to take his mind off all of the problems, and to let he and Linda share some of the load.

Several weeks later at the kwoon, just after James had completed the warm-ups with the students, a group of Chinese youths walked in the front door of the school. Bruce's attention was instantly drawn to them as he continued to teach the rudiments of the *sil lum tao* wing chun form. As he demonstrated the meanings of the movements, he could not keep from thinking that the visitors were perhaps interested in joining his class. James could see, however, that these fellows were not too impressed just by the way they stood with their arms folded in front of their chests. If anything, James began to perceive a threatening feeling in his gut.

Bruce finished his instruction and approached the Chinese visitors and began talking to them in Cantonese. James conducted the class while keeping a sharp eye on Bruce. Just from the looks of things, he sensed something was not quite right. The newcomers were standing in a very arrogant manner, their chests sticking out and their shoulders pulled back.

Several minutes later, Bruce walked briskly back to James and whispered "Jimmy! These guys want a formal challenge. The taller guy said he represents the gung fu people in San Francisco Chinatown and that he is here to vindicate them for the ill respect I've shown toward the traditional styles of Chinese gung fu. These cats think that teaching Caucasians is nontraditional and they want to try to close us down!"

"What do they want, a fight?" James asked.

"Hell yeah!" Bruce replied. "They think their style is better and they are here to prove it. Well, if they want a challenge, I'll give them a damn challenge. You back me up in case some of those other cats try to jump in, OK?"

Bruce walked back up to the front of the school. His students were standing around curiously trying to determine what was going on. As they stood there dumbfounded, James told all of them to get changed into their street clothes. "We're closing up early," he said. "Something came up."

By the time James had returned to Bruce's side, arrangements had been made to conduct a one-on-one fight between the leader and Bruce. "You people don't like me teaching Caucasians, huh?" Bruce said as he began to loosen up his shoulders. "I'll teach who I choose, and when and where I want to teach. Nobody comes into my kwoon and tells me what to do."

James was busy ushering the students through the front door while trying to explain that the entire matter was of private concern. He knew once they were outside, they would obviously try to sneak a peek through the bamboo curtains.

Bruce moved into the center of the room, followed cautiously by his challenger. Bruce's alertness was at a polished peak. Although he did not move very much after he had set in a wing chun fighting posture, one could tell that every move by his obviously able and quite flamboyant adversary was recorded. The lanky Chinese circled Bruce, his hands maneuvering in flowing, flowery motions. Bruce repositioned his wing chun posture accordingly. It was as if a gun turret was meticulously tracking its target.

For 30 seconds or so, they evaluated each other. Bruce surmised that his opponent had trained in some of the animal styles—one moment his hands were demonstrating the ruthless, animated movements of a tiger, then suddenly they turned into slithering maneuvers that resembled the antics of a deadly snake.

The Chinese suddenly pivoted to the side of Bruce and rushed in like a strong wind pushing through an open door. The tornado-like circular closed-fist maneuvers glanced off Bruce's protruding arm and left shoulder as he quickly readjusted his bent-knee, pigeon-toed stance to the new position his adversary had assumed. Then Bruce cut loose with three rapid-fire vertical wing chun punches directed at the head. The first punch struck the man's left cheekbone, just glanc-

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"Bruce chased the unwelcome intruder across the room, hitting his back and kicking him in the legs while still trying to maintain some kind of dignity."

ing to the right as the cunning opponent began another series of quick, spinning circular maneuvers. The last two punches hit the back of his shoulder.

The spectators at the front of the kwoon began shouting in their Cantonese dialect: "Now, Sifu! Dragon technique. Dragon whips tail." James yelled out "Shut up! Let your *sifu* (instructor) fight his own fight."

Bruce tried unsuccessfully several times to intimidate his adversary by feinting and faking with powerful vertical punching attacks. The slowness of the wing chun footwork held him back, even though his hands were a blur of energy. His opponent maintained a safe distance just out of Bruce's kicking range.

Explosively, as Bruce took a glance in James' direction, the adversary burst forward with a spinning backfist and struck Bruce high on the left side of the head. The moment Bruce felt the contact, he seemed to go into a rage. It appeared like he had abandoned his style in search of any type of punch that could make contact to his foe's anatomy. Seven or eight of the techniques hit his opponent in the back of the head and across the rear of the shoulders. It appeared almost funny to James to see Bruce chase the unwelcome intruder across the room, hitting his back and kicking him in the rear of the legs while still trying to maintain some kind of dignity.

The stylishness of both men's arts had totally deteriorated and it looked like a free-for-all. Bruce was flailing away on his foe's back and the side of his arms while trying to achieve a position facing his adversary. As Bruce would move around from the rear, his opponent would turn away in another circular maneuver so his back remained toward Bruce. James finally let out a guttural laugh as he watched Bruce run the fleeing Chinese into a corner while still continuing to whale on his back.

Finally, to nobody's surprise, the trapped opponent yelled out in Cantonese "Enough! Enough! Stop! No more!"

Bruce, hearing the calls to surrender, stopped and bounced away, assuming another wing chun stance. The embarrassed instructor turned around and assumed an upright position as he brushed himself off.

"Get the hell out of my kwoon," Bruce yelled at the top of his voice. "If I ever see you or any of your representatives in here again, I'm going to kick the hell out of all of them!"

Without saying a word, the discouraged and somewhat humiliated instructor led his students out of the kwoon. James collected Bruce's street clothes, grabbed his own bag, and they left the school. On the way home, Bruce said "You know, Jimmy, that was the damnest fight I've ever been in. That cat kept circling and throwing spinning attacks and I couldn't get a real good frontal shot at him. I know that poor Chinese has got a sore back tonight. My hands hurt from hitting him in the backbone so many times."

James laughed. "Wing chun works good against a fighter who stands directly in front and fights, but when the guy uses

Linda Lee (above), Bruce's wife, has never remarried. She returned to school after his untimely death and got a teaching degree. She lives in Los Angeles with her daughter Shannon.

circular moves like a boxer, it doesn't fare too well."

The remainder of the trip home was quiet. Bruce was in deep contemplation of perhaps modifying his fighting style. James finally broke the silence. "That fellow reacted like a boxer that had been cornered," he said. "When he turned his back toward you and tried to spin around, you should have shifted quick instead of remaining rigid in a pigeon-toed horse stance. You had all of the power and quickness, but that solid stance and lack of fast, shifting footwork slowed you down.

"Yeah, I know," Bruce mumbled. "I've got to improve my footwork like a boxer and get my techniques to the point where they are the ultimate, so that no other style can compare to it."

"I think you should study the boxers' footwork and get away from the rooted stances of wing chun," James said. "We should start experimenting and see if we can't take the best of everything under realistic conditions. The way I figure

Continued on page 119

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BRUCE LEE

Continued from page 35

it, a style is only as good as the practitioner, and the practitioner is only as good as the style."

Bruce thought for several seconds and then blurted out "Using no way as the way, and using the way as no way!"

James had to think a second, as he didn't know whether Bruce was joking or not. "That's one way of putting it," James finally said. "Have a style that is simple that doesn't necessarily represent one particular style, and yet, at the same time, it has everything in it. It's kind of like taking the best from everything and then simplifying it down to the bare essentials."

The next morning, Bruce went right to work on altering the flaws in his fighting style. "I should thank that character for what he did last night," Bruce told James. "He sure opened my eyes to some of the realities of self-defense. He made me realize that wing chun, when it is practiced against circular types of attacks, definitely has its disadvantages. I'm going to start making some adaptations in wing chun and refine it to the point where it will work against any style or anybody."

When James returned home from work that evening, Bruce greeted him with a wide assortment of shuffling and sidestepping attacks and defensive maneuvers. They were still a little awkward, but James could see that Bruce had not wasted a minute of time in getting his new concepts into actual practice.

Continued

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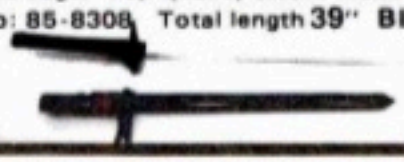

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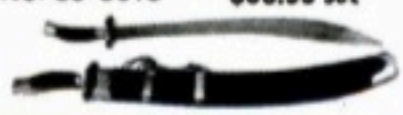

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Later that evening when James and Bruce went to the kwoon, the students were a bit confused. Some of the techniques they had learned were suddenly dropped from the training schedule. The students who were just getting the hang of the basics were now confronting an opponent. Pairing off now took priority over singular individual instruction. The students were getting their very first taste of actual controlled combat. An opponent would attack and the training partner would respond with the new fighting adaptations Bruce had introduced. It was amazingly real and yet really quite simple. When a punch or strike was coming right at their faces, Bruce was teaching the students to move their whole body out of the line of attack while simultaneously counterattacking.

Bruce continued his research in the weeks that followed. His notes began to look like a master's treatise: detailed drawings of muscle configurations, anatomical sketches depicting the body in motion while engaged in combat, detailed fighting strategies, and even a complete outline of every form of physical exercise that could be used to maximize the effects of punching, kicking, striking and blocking maneuvers. He even obtained boxing films and studied them closely.

Weeks of study and practice began to pay off for Bruce. He was not as stationary now when he moved and his timing was picking up. His feinting, bobbing and weaving antics made it very difficult for James to contend with his sporadic and unpredictable maneuvers. On those rare occasions when James would tag Bruce with a jab to the head or body, Bruce would smile and say "That was a good one, Jimmy! Let's see if you can do it again." More often than not, James

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could not duplicate the feat.

Linda gave birth to their first child, Brandon, in February, 1965, but the joyous occasion was dampened somewhat six days later when Bruce learned his father had died. Bruce left immediately for Hong Kong to attend the funeral.

Not long after his return to Oakland, Bruce got a call from noted karate instructor Ed Parker in Los Angeles. Parker told him that a producer named William Dozier had learned of Bruce through Parker's close friend, Jay Sebring (the Hollywood hairstylist later killed in the Sharon Tate murders). Dozier, the executive producer for the *Batman* television series, had viewed an eight-millimeter film of Bruce's nunchaku demonstration at Parker's 1964 Long Beach International Championships and was interested in screen-testing Bruce for a role in a new TV series called *Charlie Chan.* Parker told Bruce to expect a call from Dozier in several days.

Several weeks later, Bruce received a call from Dozier, who was sending airplane tickets so Bruce could fly to Hollywood to be interviewed, take a screen test, and possibly sign a contract. Bruce received the tickets two days later. Even though he had never expected to be in television or movies of any kind in the United States, he was pleased and excited that he could possibly spread his kung fu on such a large basis.

Bruce was gone for a week. Upon his return, everyone was eager to hear the details of the trip. Bruce explained that Ross Martin of *Wild, Wild West* fame was to play the leading role in the series. Bruce said they wanted a handsome Chinese that knew real kung fu to play Charlie Chan's number-one son, and they planned to have authentic kung fu in each episode. His screen test went well: "They said I was a natural

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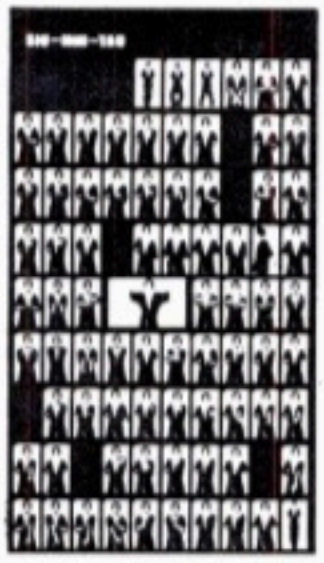

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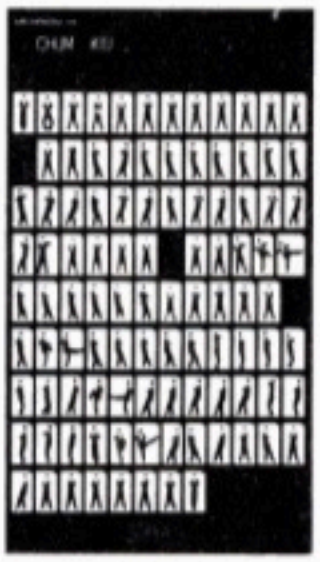

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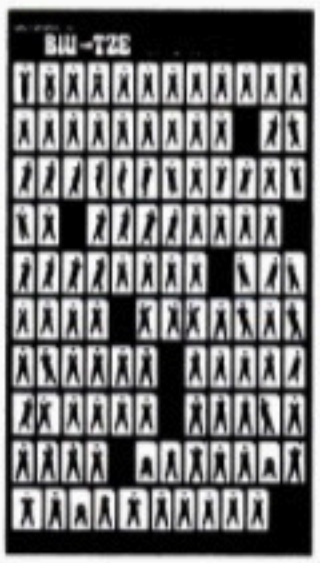

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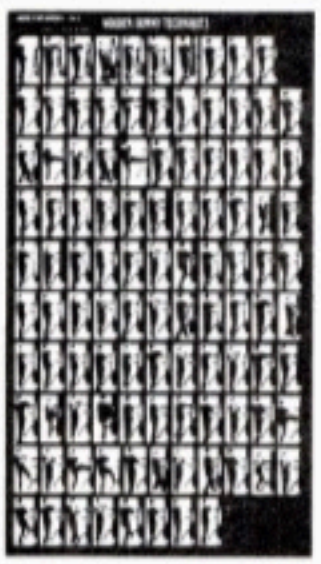

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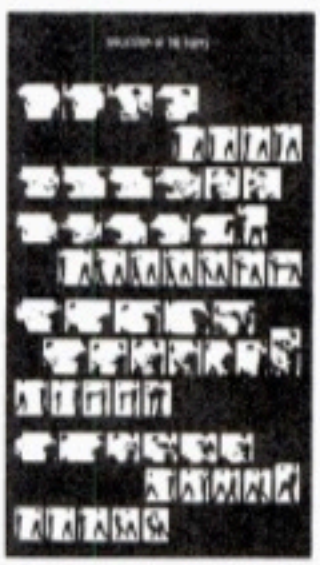

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for the part," Bruce related.

Bruce went on to say he had signed a contract option for the part and was going to start acting lessons soon.

Bruce continued his martial arts training, although he was a bit distracted by his impending television career. That changed the last week of June, however, when Bruce received a telephone call from William Dozier, explaining that the show had been scrapped for lack of sponsors.

For weeks following the unfortunate news, Bruce was rather distraught. He felt the people in Hollywood had lied to him. Bruce buried himself in his attempt to create the ulti-

> ***"Bruce decided shuffling provided the best way of maneuvering from one point to another."***

mate martial art. His 25th birthday came and went in November and Linda gave him a surprise party. But it didn't slow Bruce down in the least.

He was still having a problem determining the best type of footwork. He came to the conclusion there were essentially eight types of footwork, each with its own distinct fighting characteristics: sliding, shuffling, stepping, extended stepping, jumping, dropping, spinning, turning, and hopping. Bruce eventually decided shuffling provided the best all-around way of maneuvering from one point to another while still being able to apply both offensive and defensive techniques in the safest manner.

In February, Bruce received a surprise call from Ed Parker, who told him he was up for the part of "Kato" in a new series called *The Green Hornet*. Bruce was somewhat reluctant at

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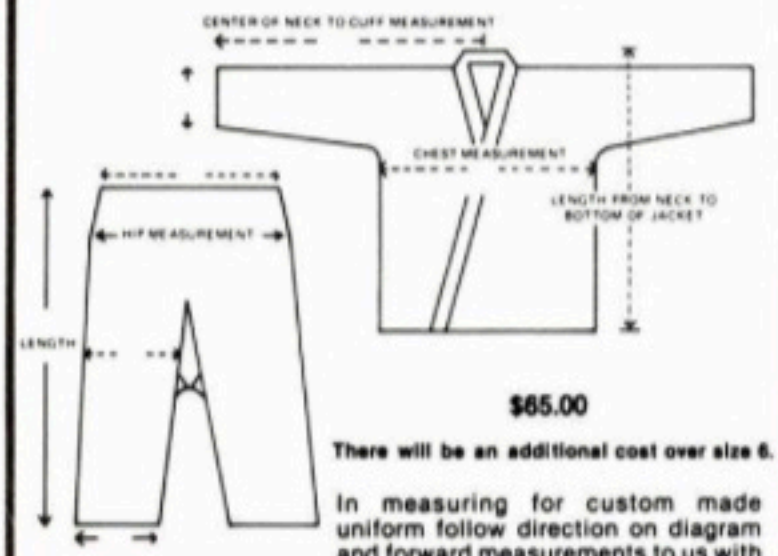

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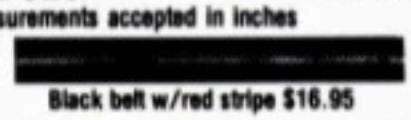
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first after his first Hollywood experience, but when 20th Century Fox contacted him, he agreed to come down for another screen test. Once again he got the part and signed a contract, but this time there was no lack of sponsors and Bruce made arrangements to move his family to Los Angeles.

The last week in March, 1966, Bruce and Linda packed their belongings into a rented moving truck, gathered up Brandon, and prepared to leave the Oakland residence that had been their home for the last one-and-a-half years. Bruce assured James that he would be coming back up as often as possible to train the students at the kwoon.

James was visibly affected by Bruce and Linda's departure and appeared as if he had lost the very best friend he had ever had. He could not help but reflect on all the joys and sorrows they had shared and that had intertwined their lives. He waved good-bye as Bruce backed the truck into the street and drove away into the night. James knew their departure was only to serve as a new beginning and was a necessary growth experience for the happy couple. It was time for the people in Hollywood to find out what Bruce Lee was all about.

Bruce Lee, of course, went on to become a motion picture star in both America and Hong Kong until his sudden death in 1973. James Yimm Lee died a year earlier of lung cancer. Linda Lee has never remarried and eventually returned to college to obtain a teaching degree. She lives in the Los Angeles area with her 16-year-old daughter, Shannon. Brandon Lee, 21, also lives in Los Angeles and is pursuing a career in acting.

About the Authors: Greglon Lee is the son of James Yimm Lee and teaches martial arts in Berkeley, California. Sid Campbell runs an Okinawan karate school in Oakland.

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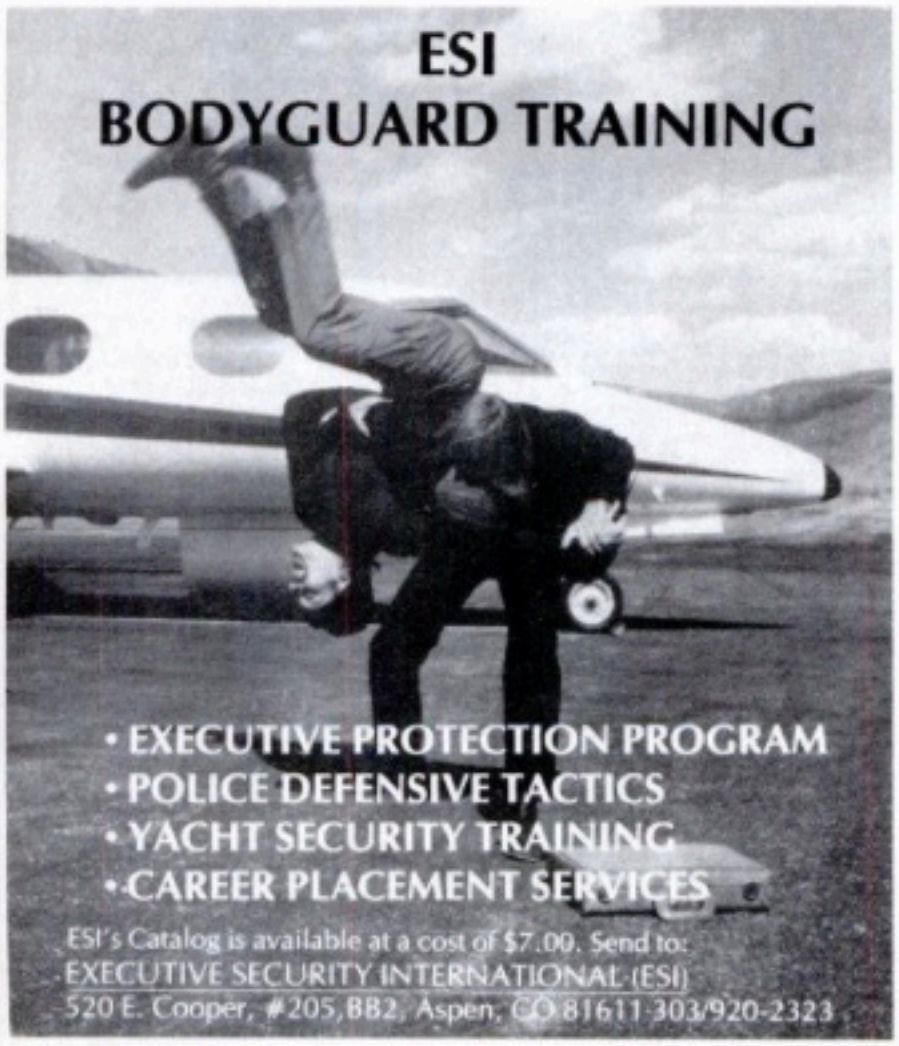

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